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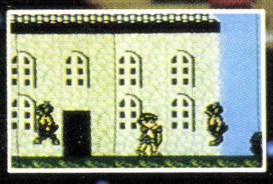
October 1990

Go Behind the Scenes at Origin Systems to See How Wing Commander's Fabulous Battle Graphics Came to Be

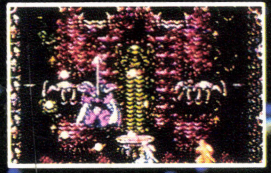
Check Out Our Winter Computer-Game Preview to See What's Coming Up

MAPS AND TIPS:

BRODERBUND'S
Battle of Olympus, Part I



TECMO'S
Ninja Gaiden II, Part II



ZAP THE ZAPPER!

Hands-Free Firing With Konami's Laser Scope



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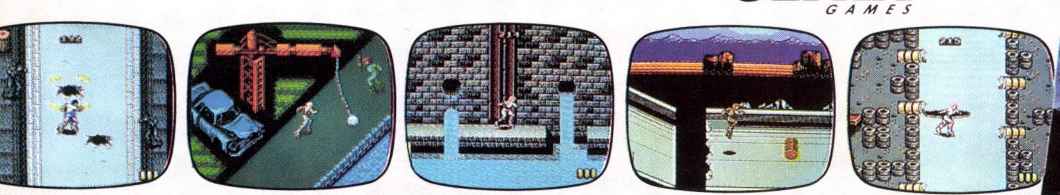
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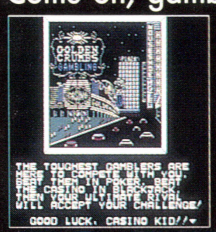
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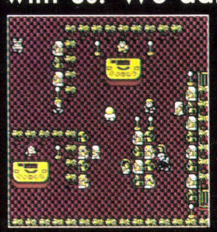
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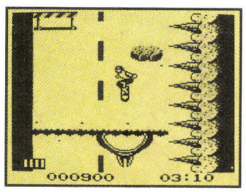
So all you'll get is a skateboard.

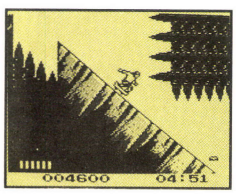


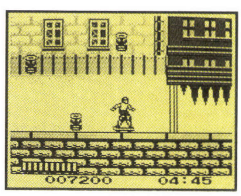
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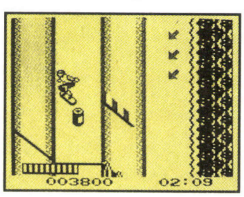
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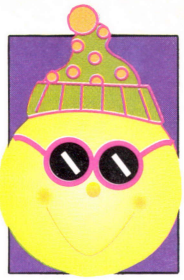
CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: Origin Systems' *Wing Commander* is filled with stunning movielike images that will amaze you. Our look behind the scenes at the making of this computer masterpiece starts on page 132.

Inset Photography: Garry Brod
Model: Donn Nauert

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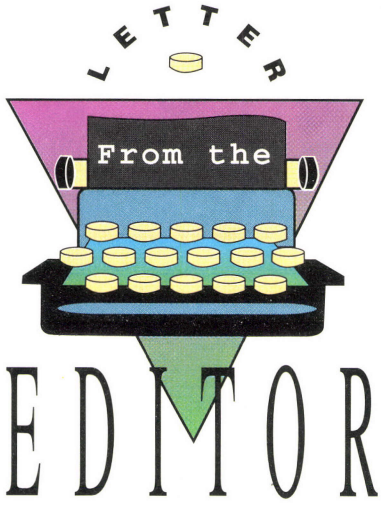
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As our readers know, VG&CE is not afraid to speak out. Also, this space in the magazine is my spot to rant and rave about the video-game industry. Boy, am I going to rant now.

It didn't hit me when I first saw it at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show this past June, nor did I think much about it when I reread Nintendo's media kit after the show in preparation for what we'd be covering in the magazine until the next CES. What I should have seen right away gradually dawned on me after a few others—people who are members of the industry—brought their outrage to my attention.



By the time you read this, Nintendo should have already released a game called *Dr. Mario*. Similar to Sega's *Columns* game—both of which appear to have used the form and success of *Tetris* for their designs—colored dots drop from the top of the screen and must be arranged to create matches.

Sega's game has the pieces represented as gems, and the detail of their appearance on the screen makes them look much like cut jewels. But Nintendo's *Dr. Mario* is *very* different from the Sega version.

Pills.

For some unfathomable reason, *Dr. Mario*'s designers chose to define the clumps of colored pixels that make up the pieces as vitamins that the player piles up. They could have said they were rocks, paint pellets or moon rocks, and the player would have followed along. After all, video games are filled with fantastic concepts for the player to believe in. No, they decided to make them pills.

From a company that has some solid restrictions on what can appear in games—there are limits on blood and religious symbols, for example—it's just appalling that *Dr. Mario* could have passed by all of its employees without one person raising an eyebrow to a design that encourages playing with drugs. Where were Nintendo's stiff limitations then?

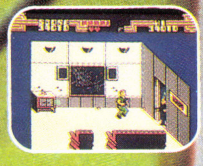
As a parent in the '90s, I know it's hard enough to protect our children from the influences of this permissive society. While building a protective shell around our kids may sound good, it keeps them from experiencing life. But, now that parents have learned to trust an "electronic baby-sitter," it's disturbing to think that a parent may find a video game "teaching" their child that playing with pills is okay.

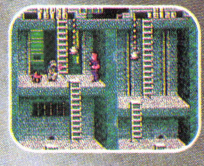
These days, video games are being scrutinized enough by various parties as damaging to our youth, but I discount this based on my own kids. They seem to be able to disassociate the real from the fake well enough. But I'm not willing to take chances on whether my kids will understand that drugs are not playthings. This is a dangerous precedent to play with. It's not one that a video game should mess with.

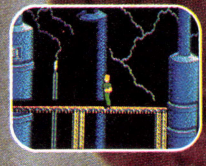
While my job brings the majority of video-game products through my home, one game you will not find on my home shelves is *Dr. Mario*. I urge all of you to let Nintendo know if you feel the same way.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

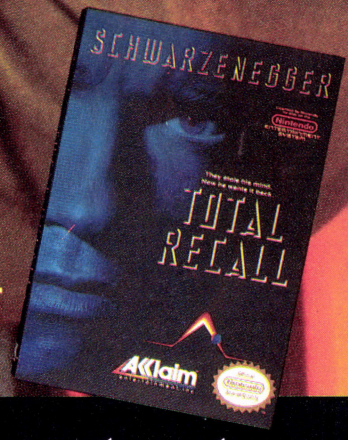
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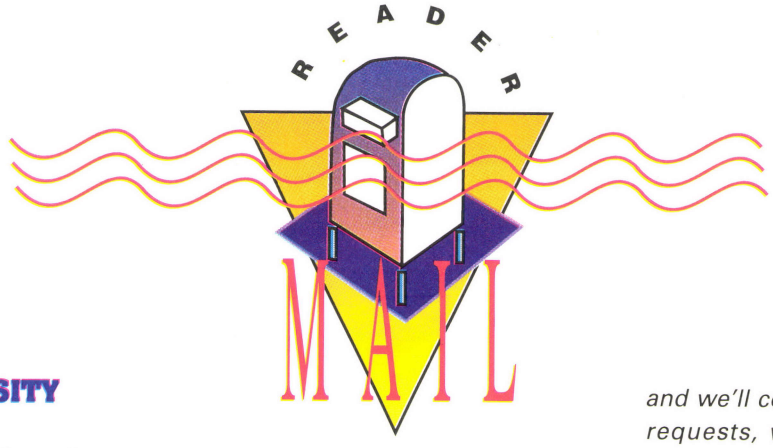
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ARCADE CURIOSITY

Dear VG&CE:

On some of the new Taito coin-ops I have seen a sticker on the underside of the joystick box that says "Dynamo video game system." Is this a Taito VGS? What's the deal?

—Geoff Oltmans
Newton, Alabama

No, Geoff, this isn't a new game system from Taito. There are many companies in the arcade business that build kit cabinets. These units contain the guts of an arcade game; namely the monitor and power circuits required to run a game. Once an arcade owner has a cabinet, all he has to do to switch games is get the circuit-board kit for a certain game from the manufacturer and plug it into the cabinet. This method is a lot cheaper than buying the whole cabinet each time and having it shipped to the arcade.

In the case you refer to, the cabinet you saw was made by one of the kit-cabinet manufacturers, Dynamo Corporation.

ATARI INQUIRY

Dear VG&CE:

I've been getting your magazine for almost a year now. I really enjoy reading it.

I have an Atari 5200 for some games, but my joysticks are broken, and I can't find a place to buy anymore joysticks or games. I was wondering if there is any place where I can buy them. Thank you and keep up the good work.

—Seth King
Camden Arizona

Though Atari doesn't support the 5200 with new products, you might try contacting them to see if they can help you with your search. Atari's phone number is (408) 745-2000.

The only other advice we can give is to try local toy stores, but it is unlikely that'll yield any results, due to the 5200's obsolete status. Your best bet is to put an ad in the local paper to see if someone in your community would be willing to part with their 5200 supplies. Best of luck.

A COVER-UP?

Dear VG&CE:

Even though I do not own a computer-entertainment system, I was instantly and magnetically attracted to your magazine the minute I saw it on the stand. Why? The cover and the article on the soon-to-be-released *Total Recall* game.

I'm writing because I was wondering if it was possible to get a print of Jim Auckland's artwork minus the type. It would be greatly appreciated if you could let me know if and how I can get one. Thank you.

—Tanya Knight
Seattle, Washington

Thanks for your compliments, Tanya. We strive to get the best quality in our magazine, and that includes the artwork we use.

As far as reprints of the cover, we've considered making posters of the art to sell, but didn't think there would be that much interest. We'll put the call out to our readers now, though: If you are interested in having VG&CE *offer poster-sized blowups of our covers, drop us a note and we'll consider it. If we get a lot of requests, we'll devote space in the magazine on what posters are available and how to order. Thanks for asking, Tanya.*

PORTABLE POWER

Dear VG & CE:

I read the article on the portable TurboGrafx-16 and was pleased, but I have a couple of questions. My first is whether they will make a hookup for the CD games? Also, when will it come out and how much it will cost? Will NEC make some of the other games like *Atomic Robo Kid*, *Golden Axe*, *Altered Beast*, *Snow Bros.* and *Thunder Force 3*? Finally, would you give me the TurboGrafx-16 address?

I love your magazine.

—Eric Oxley
New Castle, Indiana

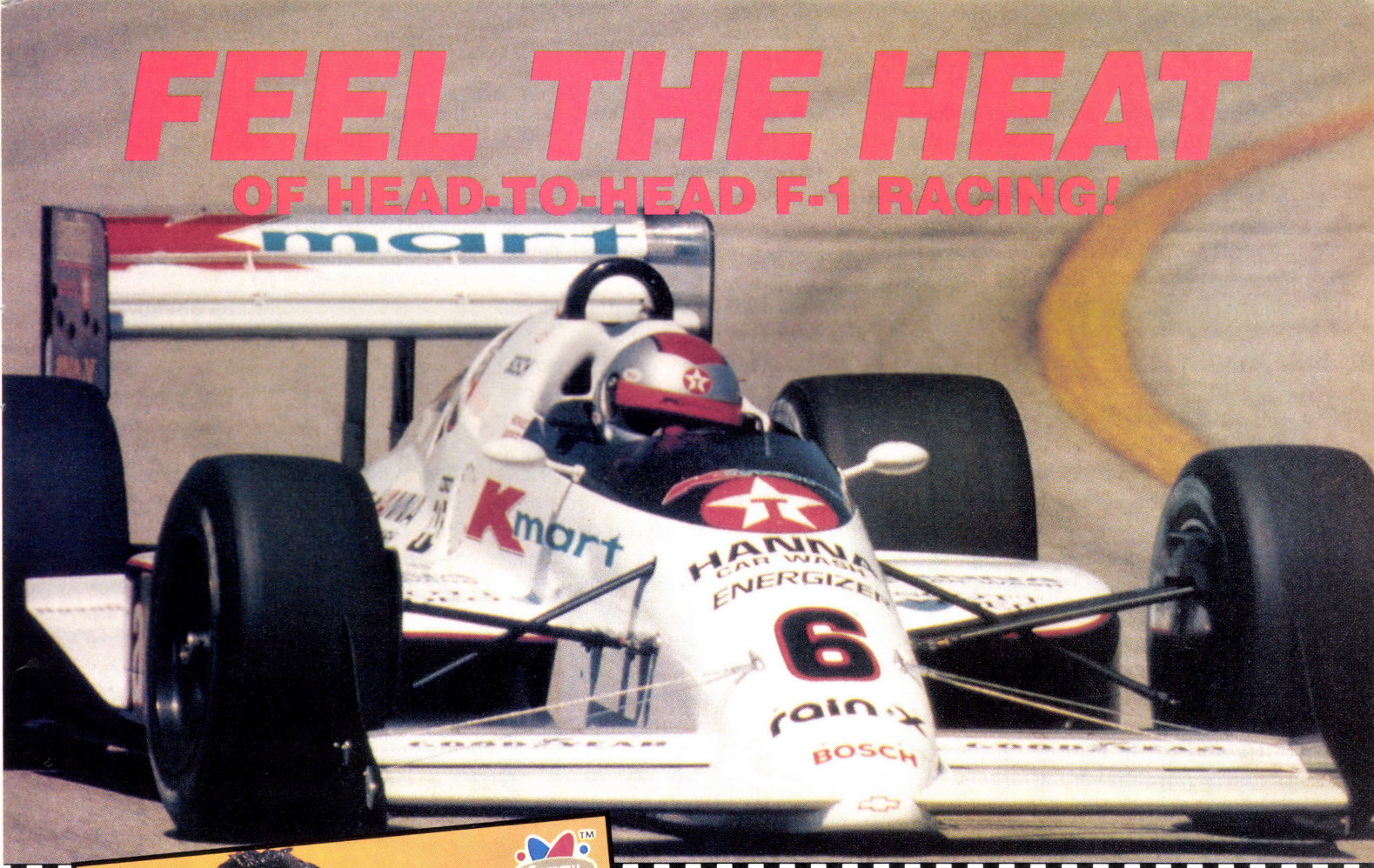
As of this writing, NEC isn't planning on putting a port on the TurboExpress (the name for the TurboGrafx-16 portable) that would enable hooking it to the TurboGrafx-CD Player or external controllers. A device of this technological level is quite expensive to make—and, therefore, expensive to buy—so it's likely that NEC is trying to cut costs wherever possible. The TE is due out by the end of 1990 at a cost of around $250.

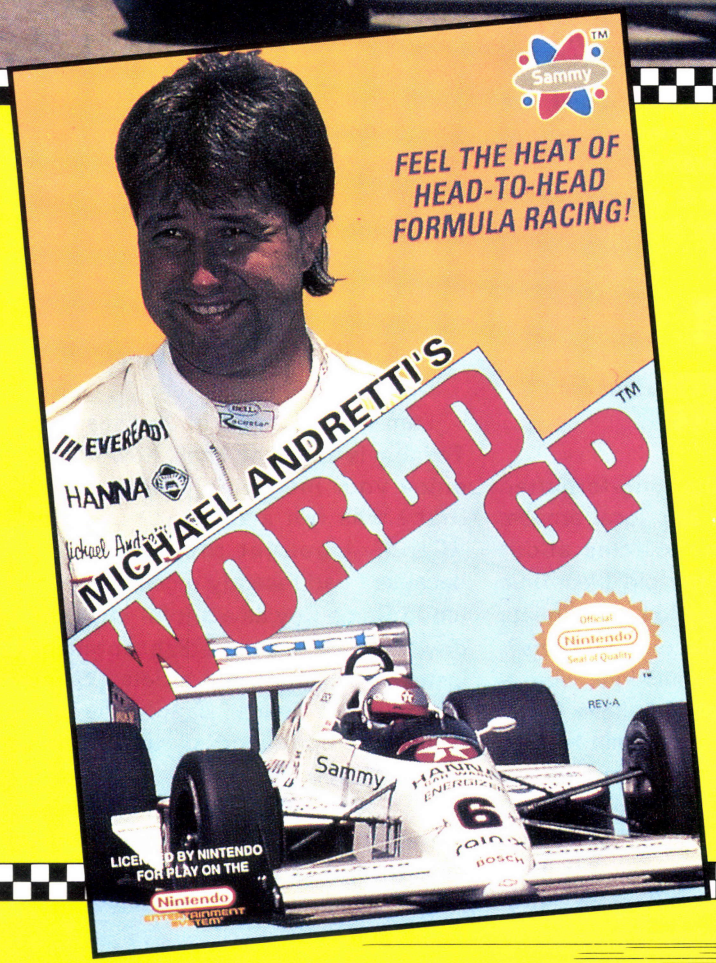
To answer your software question, it's unlikely that NEC would bring any of those games out, with the exception of Snow Bros., *due to the nature of the American cartridge market.*

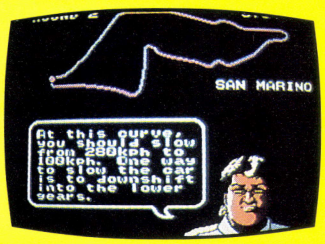
Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

FEEL THE HEAT

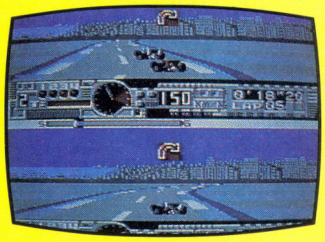
OF HEAD-TO-HEAD F-1 RACING!





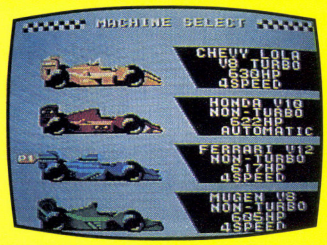


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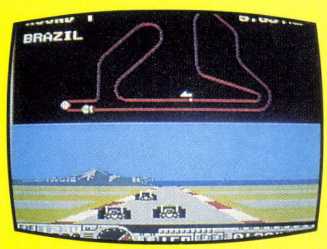


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CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

There are very few games that make it to more than one game machine, due to exclusivity in contracts. Snow Bros *is an exception because it hasn't yet appeared on any video-game system.*

NEC's address is 1255 Michael Drive, Wood Dale, IL 60191, and its phone number is (708) 860-9500.

READY FOR 16-BIT

Dear VG & CE:

I am a devoted fan and have cancelled my subscription to Nintendo's magazine to join yours. I feel that Nintendo doesn't deserve the huge success that it has acquired, and here is the reason why: Due to endless [publicity] in *Nintendo Power* about *Dragon Warrior* (American version of *Dragon Quest*), I bought it last fall. It was a flop of a role-playing game.

Having given up on Nintendo, I recently purchased a Genesis and *Phantasy Star II*. The Genesis was in every detail far superior to the NES, and *Phantasy Star II* was brilliant. In your June 1990 issue's *Inside Gaming* column, Nintendo announced that it would give the public a 16-bit system when it felt we were ready for it. Well, Nintendo, we are ready and you are too late!

—Jack Chen
White Stone, New York

As we've said before, we're disappointed and amazed that Nintendo would, given the strategy that got them to the top of the video-game market, let NEC and Sega get a big head start on the sales of 16-bit systems. At current estimates, it will be 1991 before we see the Super Famicom, which is rumored will be named the SFX in America, in stores here.

A LOT TO ASK

Dear VG&CE:

I have 5 questions:

1. Are Mega Drive games compatible with the Genesis?
2. Will there be a *Neutopia 2*?
3. Will *Batman* come to the Sega Genesis?
4. Will the SuperGrafx come to the U.S.?
5. Is *Final Blow, Buster Douglas Knockout Boxing*?

—Mike Bugel
Streamwood, Illinois

Here are the answers (though you probably won't be happy):

1. Yes, Mega Drive games are compatible with the Genesis, but the cartridge casings are different. To play Mega Drive games on your Genesis, you either have to take the circuit boards out of the case or do some "cosmetic surgery" to your Genesis to allow the cartridge to fit. Electronically, the two cartridges are essentially identical.

2. There has been no announcement of a Neutopia 2.

3. There is a Batman *for the Mega Drive, but no announcements have been made that the game will come to the Genesis.*

4. No announcements have been made of bringing the SuperGrafx to America. We would expect NEC to try and sell the TG-16 to more players before bringing the SuperGrafx here.

5. Yes, Final Blow *is going to come to America as* Buster Douglas Knockout Boxing.

MAKING A STARTLING DISC-OVERY

Dear VG & CE:

Recently I saw the long-forgotten game *Dragon's Lair* at a local arcade. After reading some articles about laser-disc games in my old *Electronic Games,* I got this question in my head: Why did laser discs become obsolete?

First of all, these machines were a marvel of technology. I believe video games will never come close to producing graphics and sound in the same way laser discs did. They brought new life to arcades. People felt like they were in a world of fantasy when playing these laser games.

Next, what do you people mean by no action in "lasers"? Games such as *Cliff Hanger* and *Freedom Fighter* contain more action than anyone could dream of.

Even though laser-disc games broke down often, I think companies should give laser discs another chance. Now in 1990, new technology can cause laser-disc games to break down less often, if ever.

—Todd Shimoyama
Northridge, California

Dragon's Lair *was an interesting game, but it shows one of the problems with laser-disc games: access time. When you moved the joystick on that game, the screen would black out for a few seconds while the internal disc player tried to find the correct track the next segment was on. I think you'll agree that most arcadiacs are looking for something a bit more exciting.*

Certainly, strides are being taken to make disc accesses quicker, and the laser-disc concept makes it much cheaper to change games—even cheaper than the kit cabinets we discussed earlier—but no one has attempted to retry the use of laser discs in the arcade recently. The benefits you noted, sound and graphics, seem to give way to other negatives that deter the coin-op industry from trying again.

HE LIKES WHAT HE SAW

Dear VG & CE:

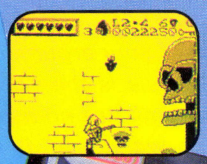
I am writing to you for two reasons. The first is to let you know how much I enjoy your magazine. I must admit that I was not a regular reader of VG&CE. I bought the July issue, because I had recently received a Nintendo Game Boy as a gift for my birthday, and as I skimmed through the issue in the store, the article "Game Boys Buyer's Guide" caught my eye. After I got home and started reading the magazine, I realized the high quality of VG&CE. The maps and articles are excellent, and the tips are very helpful. I'm looking forward to the next issue and future articles about Game Boy.

Now for the second reason that I'm writing to you. In the *Easter Egg Hunt* department in the July issue, I found

DRAGON SLAYING!
GAME BOY ACTION!
WEB SLINGING!

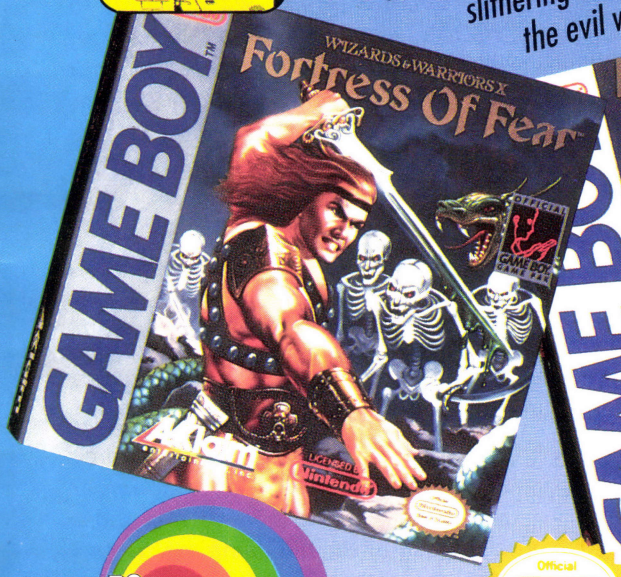






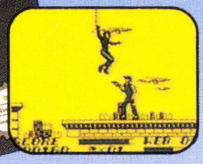
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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

an error in one of the tips for *Super C*. The tip was as follows: "...to start the game with ten men, during the title screen press R, L, D, A, B, then **START**." The correct code is R, L, D, U, A, B, then **START**. I just thought that this should be brought to your attention.

—Eric Paller
Burbank, Illinois

Thanks for the compliments on the magazine. We hook a lot of new readers at the newsstands when they pick up the magazine and see what VG&CE *has to offer, just as you did. Indeed, you can look forward to more Game Boy coverage in future issues, particularly the monthly* Gaming on the Go *column that Maurice Molyneaux puts together.*

Each month we try to put together a good cross section of material for all game systems. For example, the July issue had the "Game Boy Buyer's Guide"; the November will have a "Genesis Buyer's Guide" in it (along with some other surprises); and the December issue will contain a "TurboGrafx-16 Buyer's Guide."

As far as the Super C *error, consider it duly noted, and we have also aired out our mistake in this month's* Easter Egg Hunt *too. Thanks for writing, Eric.*

AT THE GENESIS OF GAME PLAYING

Dear VG &CE:

I would like to congratulate you on the great magazine that you produce. Your reviews of games are in-depth and give us gamers an idea of how good or bad the games are. But there is one thing that angers me about your magazine and other gaming magazines, that you do not really support and give credit to the Sega Genesis, which is the first and only true 16- bit game system in America. Rather than that I see more reviews and tips for the Nintendo, which is understandable, and the TurboGrafx-16, then only three or four pages for the Genesis. Why aren't there more reviews? I have spoken to a lot of Genesis owners, and they feel the same way.

One of the reasons I subscribe to a gaming magazine is for the amount of Genesis reviews and tips that the magazine possesses. If you were to add a lot more reviews and tips for the Genesis, I know that I—along with a lot of other gamers—would subscribe to your magazine.

Speaking of tips, I have noticed that your column *Easter Egg Hunt* is only a few pages long and not full of tactics. Please give us more!

—Grant Hawkins
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Thanks for your letter, Grant. This is an issue we have been trying to deal with, and we get a great amount of mail on this. The main reason we haven't been putting as many Genesis reviews in the magazine was the lack of software available for review right after the machine was released. I think you'll agree that since you wrote your letter to us, our coverage of the Genesis has balanced out with the other game machines.

On the other side of your argument, the fact that the Genesis is the "only true 16-bit game system" has no bearing on how much we cover it in VG&CE, *rather it's the availability of products to write about. In fact, our November issue will feature a surprise for Genesis owners. We're sure if you pick up a copy, you won't be at all disappointed.*

The purpose of our magazine isn't to cover the most powerful machine, but video games as a whole, so we don't cover just one single system. Some people aren't interested in the "best"; there are lots of gamers who still plug in and enjoy their Atari 2600, Intellivision or Colecovision, game consoles that most would consider antiques. (Hard to believe that these were king-of-the-hill game machines a decade ago!)

Finally, our Easter Egg Hunt *is mainly for tricks and such in video games. Our* Tip Sheet *column and strategy guides cover tactics.*



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CIRCLE #107 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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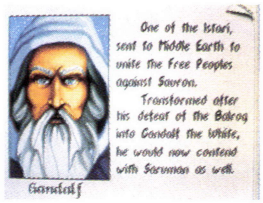
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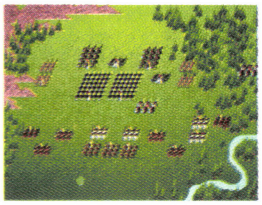
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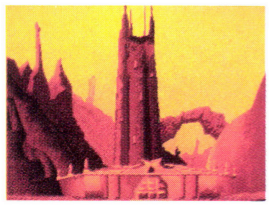
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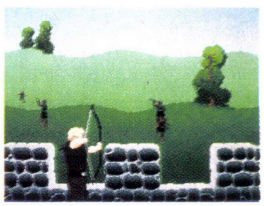
Actual IBM screens











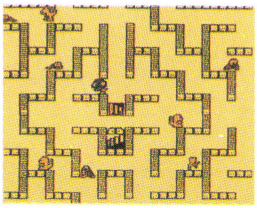
System Requirements: IBM PC, true IBM compatibles. DOS 2.1 or higher. 512K RAM, MCGA, VGA, EGA or Tandy graphics card. 5.25" and 3.5" disks available. Amiga and Atari STE. Mouse optional. Ad Lib card support.

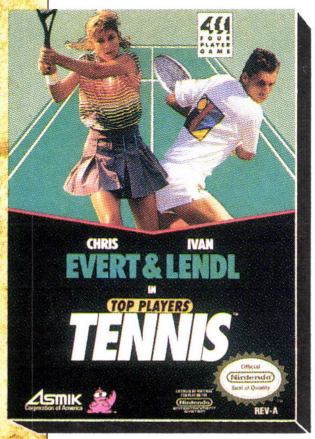
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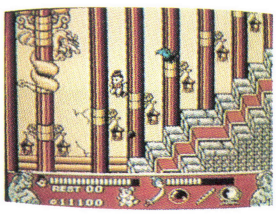


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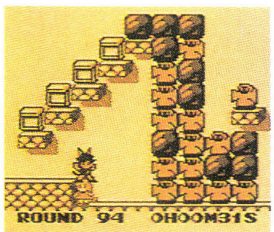


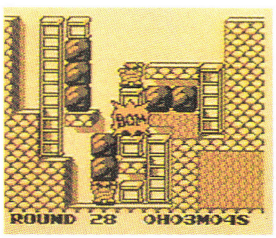


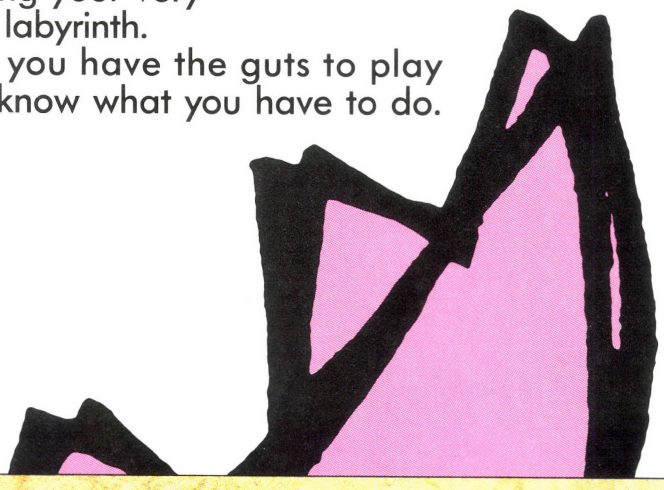
If these games aren't exactly up your alley, then there's Catrap, a unique labyrinth of complicated mazes and monsters that seems to go on forever. And if you manage to solve Catrap's puzzle, amaze your friends by designing your very own mazes for the labyrinth.

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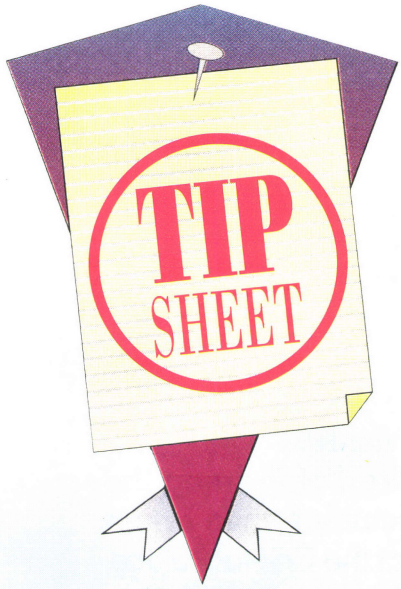




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CIRCLE #109 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



by Donn Nauert

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VideoGames & Computer Entertainment has designed *Tip Sheet* to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to

VG&CE,
9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
Attn: *Tip Sheet*

I own a Sega Genesis along with five games. I have two questions for you. My first question concerns *The Revenge of Shinobi*. I can't seem to get through the level with the maze. Can you help me?

Also, I've heard from a friend that there is a continue for *Last Battle*. Is there?

—Steve Delao
San Jose, California

From your description it sounds like you're stuck in the cellar maze (District 8) in The Revenge of Shinobi. *To get through this stage you will need to look for a wall that doesn't reach the ceiling, then drop down and enter the second door. Once through the door, proceed to the left, and go through the first door you come to. Go to the left until you see two doors on top of each other, and enter the bottom one. Before you exit, look for the hidden P.O.W.*

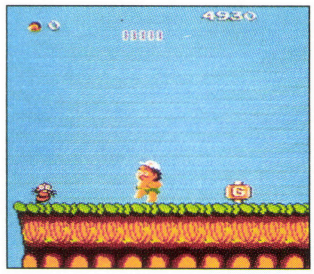
And yes, Last Battle *does have a continue, but you must first get past Chapter 1. When Legend of the Final Hero appears on the screen, press the* A, B and C *buttons simultaneously and then press* ***START.***

I've always wanted to know if there is a warp zone or some easier way to beat *Hudson's Adventure Island* for the NES. I would also like to know if there is a way to stay on a world and not have to go back to World 1-1 after I die. Finally, is there a way to get a lot of extra men?

—Farrah Maffet
Belvidere, Illinois

Located on the edge of the cliff at the end of Area 1 is a bee. This bee will allow you to continue in the same section that you lost your last man, provided that you hold the directional control in any direction, and hit button A and then ***START*** *when your game ends.*

No, I'm sorry, there are no warps or ways to obtain a lot of men that we know of. You might get a copy of the September 1989 and October 1989 issues of VG&CE. *There is a complete strategy guide that will help you in the later stages of the game.*



***Here's the bee at the end of World 1-1 that will let you have unlimited continues in* Hudson's Adventure Island.**

I've had *RoboWarrior* for almost six months, and I can't get past Level 4. Do you have any information on how to get past this stage of the game?

—Jason Grimes
Citrus Heights, California

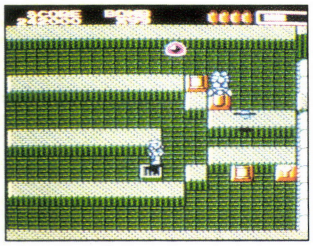
Reading your letter I'm not sure if you're having trouble finding the key in 4-1 or 4-2, so we'll help you through all of Level 4. (The rest is up to you.)

In Level 4-1 the key is located in the middle of the last row (going up/down) on the right. In Level 4-2 the chalice is located just under the ledge shown in the picture, while the key is located in the bottom right-hand section. Section 4-3 is very straightforward, so I'll skip its description.

We've also got some Easter eggs, if you're interested. The following trick is best done in Level 1-1. First you should collect 62 bombs and get the megaton

PERIOD 4-1





Top and above left: In RoboWarrior, you'll have unlimited use of all your items, as the lantern count of 13 shows.

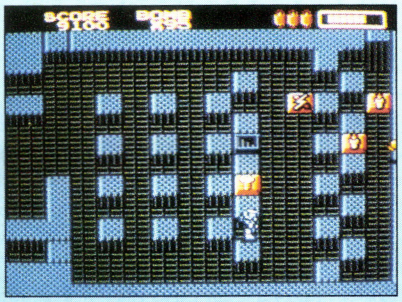
Above right: When you get to Period 4-2, you'll find the key located in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen, which will allow you skip to Period 4-3.

bomb in the idol room of 1-1. Then find a Lurcher and shoot him until he's destroyed, but make sure that you are facing down when you destroy him. As soon as he explodes, press the ***SELECT*** *button to go into the subscreen, and move the cursor to the energy capsules. On Controller 2, press and hold U and the L and as soon as the music repeats (you'll have to listen carefully), press A on Controller 1 twice. You'll now be able to use all of the weapons and items indefinitely.*

Wait, it gets better. Once you've done this trick correctly, you can then press U, L and ***SELECT*** *on Controller 1 at the same time and get a stage select.*

Finally, we have one more. After all this, if you press ***START*** *to pause, then press and hold the B and* ***SELECT*** *buttons, you can walk through all obstacles. Remember, the key for these tricks to work is the 62 bombs, the megaton bomb and shooting the Lurcher while facing down.*

If this doesn't work, when you're in the subscreen, do the trick as written but instead press A twice when the music restarts (listen closely). I've never worried about the music, but some people claim that it's the only way they can get the trick to work.







Top: The key in Period 4-1 is in the center of the screen.

Middle: Did you know you can walk through walls?

Bottom: The chalice will help you get the key in Period 4-2.

I can't seem to get past Natas in *Dungeon Explorer*. Any suggestions?

—Mitchell George
Silver Spring, Maryland

The key to beating Natas is having a strong character and plenty of continues left when you reach him. I've found the easiest way to defeat him is to get in one of the upper corners and blast away.

Here's a special code that will allow you to walk through walls and bushes. Input DEBDE DEBDA, then press the I *and* ***RUN*** *buttons at the same time. Press the* ***II*** *button to return to the password-character selection, and then input one of your own codes.*

In *Phantasy Star*, I have conquered Lassic and returned to the governor's mansion about four or five months ago. I can't find the Governor anywhere. I have searched all three planets. Where is he?

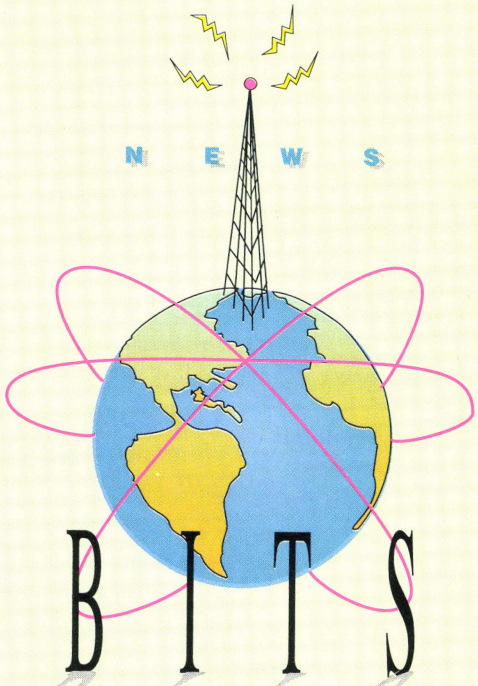
—K.C. Teschner
Culver, Minnesota



In Dungeon Explorer, use the codes for invincibility and the Level 19 fighter to make quick work of Natas.

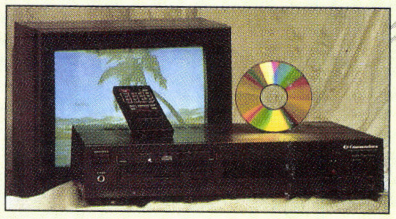
After you have defeated Lassic, you must keep Myau alive or have a transfer so that you can return to Palma. Once you enter the Governor's mansion, you will fall through a pit trap. Follow the corridors and you'll eventually fall through two more pit traps. You will find yourself facing a two-way hall. Go right and go around two corners. Take three steps and face the wall on the left—a secret door will be revealed. If you enter and follow the corridor, you'll eventually come to a magic door. At this time you can heal yourself with burgers. When you enter the door, you'll do battle with the last enemy. I'll let you take it from there. Good luck.

COMPILED BY
JOYCE WORLEY



Commodore Introduces CDTV

The Commodore Dynamic Total Vision (CDTV) had its first airing at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show and should be on retailer's shelves this fall. The CDTV player combines a compact-disc player with a personal computer, then connects to a



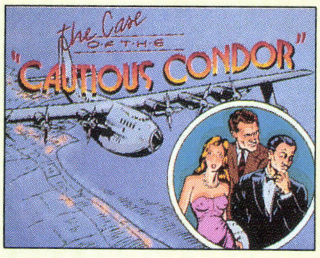
television and home stereo set. The user accesses on-screen information with an infrared remote control. Later this year Commodore will market a computer keyboard, joysticks, disk drive and printer meant to interface with the CDTV.

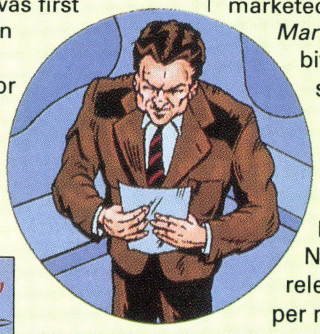
Nolan Bushnell (the computer pioneer best known for the invention of *Pong* and the founding of Atari) was recently named general manager of Commodore's interactive consumer products division. Nolan explained CDTV: "We do not think of CDTV programs as software. Instead, the concept that drives CDTV is that of an electronic, interactive, instantaneously accessible library. We will have fiction, nonfiction, reference and entertainment titles that provide consumers with a truly unique source of information and entertainment."

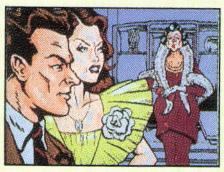
Among the reference materials planned are an encyclopedia; world atlas; almanac; instructional programs on such subjects as cooking, sports and foreign languages; and special learning programs. Music from rock to opera will be supported with video graphics. Electronic games are said to gain sophistication and depth of play, sound and graphics in the new format.

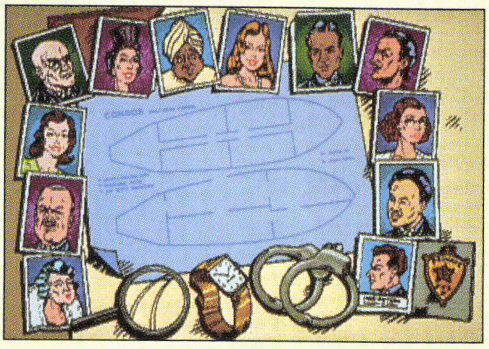
In an associated story, Tiger Media introduced their first entertainment title for the CDTV—*Airwave Adventure—The Case of the Cautious Condor.* A 1930's murder mystery, it uses comic-book characters and is said to be 100 times larger in data and graphic capacity than any titles for any format. It contains three hours of CD audio, 700 original color pictures and 200 kilobytes of program. The game features a murder aboard a luxury airliner and gives the player 20 minutes to find the killer.

Tiger Media is using technology that is non-specific to any system so that the company can develop titles on all optical disc formats, including CD-I and CD-ROM XA. *Airwave Adventure* was first introduced in Japan last December for play on Fujitsu's FM/Towns computer.









NIntendo to Launch 16-Bit Game Machine in Japan

Nintendo will start selling its 16-bit video-game machine in Japan in late November of this year, according to company spokesmen. Dubbed the Super Famicom, the game machine will eventually be sold in the U.S. and Europe, but the company has not announced the date for the American launch.

The Super Famicom reportedly uses a one-megabit dynamic random-access memory microchip and will be able to display 52,000 colors. It will be marketed initially with *Super Mario Brothers 4.* The 16-bit Famicom is not software compatible with the 8-bit Nintendo Entertainment System, and, beginning in 1991, Nintendo expects to release one new game per month for the new computer.

Activision Is First American Famicom Developer

The world's first third-party software developer has been named as the first American company permitted to develop software for Nintendo's Super Famicom. Mediagenic is the first U.S. company to get a license from Nintendo for game development on Nintendo's new 16-bit system.

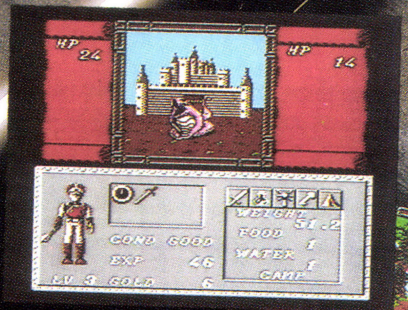
Bruce Davis, chairman and CEO of Mediagenic, explained why this is such an exciting

A Game So True-to-Life, You Don't Just Play It. You Live It!

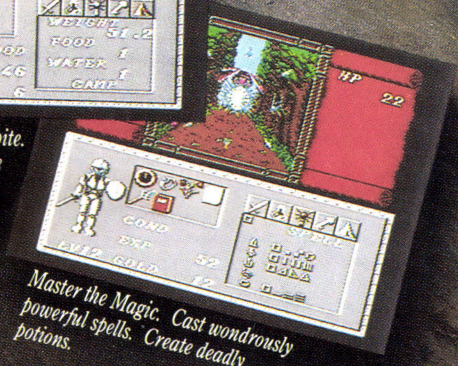
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Finally, a fantasy role-playing adventure that makes you a part of the action.

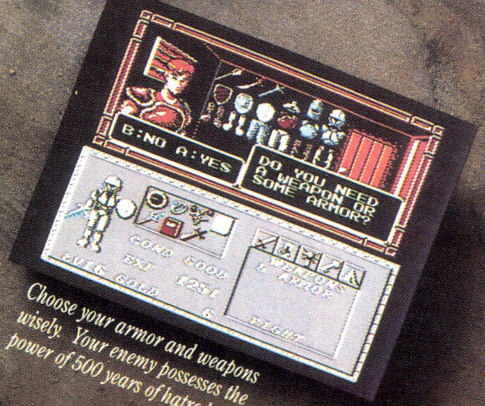




Beware of the serpant's bite. It is deadly. And you are vulnerable.



Master the Magic. Cast wondrously powerful spells. Create deadly potions.



Choose your armor and weapons wisely. Your enemy possesses the power of 500 years of hatred and evil.

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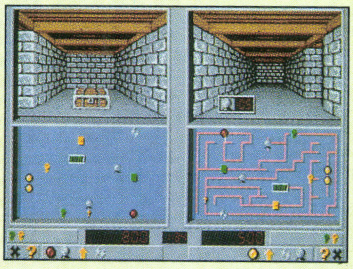
move for his company: "As the first U.S. developer for the Super Famicom system, we're primed to take advantage of this next generation in video gaming...."

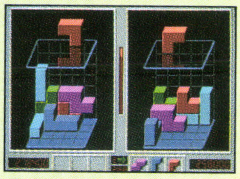
Davis went on to talk about the new hardware system. "The capabilities of this next generation video-game system are extraordinary. With it, we have finally reached the point where the depth and quality of video games will clearly surpass that of computer entertainment."

Information about the first American games to be readied for the Super Famicom is sketchy. However, the first round of titles includes a product based on FASA Corporation's *Battletech*, plus an air-combat flight simulator and a sports game. The Activision-brand cartridges will be marketed first in Japan and later in the U.S. and Europe, when the Super Famicom becomes available.

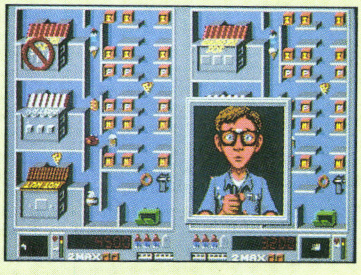
Live Studios *Future Classics* Have Alternating Screen

The first game from Live Studios is an entertainment for play on Amiga and IBM PC (and compatibles) called *Future Classics Collection.* It features an unusual arrangement of the playscreen: When two gamers play head-to-head, the display goes to split-screen perspective. When only one gamer is using the program, it expands to full-screen play.





The disk contains five games, *Diskman, Tankbattle, Blockalanche, Lost 'n' Maze* and *Diet Riot,* and each game has from 12 to 50 levels. Already available at most stores in the U.S., the game is currently being translated into French, German and Italian for European distribution.



Asuka Joins Atlus in Attempt to Put *Stadium* in Game Boy

Asuka Technologies (Irvine, California) has joined with Atlus, Ltd., to provide games for the NES and the Game Boy. They currently have plans on the drawing board for *Pocket Stadium*, a baseball simulation for play on Game Boy. Although it will not be ready for market until some time in 1991, *Pocket Stadium* promises to be a complex stat-replay team-management game that belies its small housing.

Asuka is best known as a provider of Macintosh and IBM products. Atlus is a Japanese game-development company; some of the best-known games from Atlus are *Kwirk, the Chilled Tomato* (Game Boy by Acclaim), *Bonk's Adventure* (TurboGrafx-16 by NEC) and *Major League Baseball* (NES by LJN). The first game from the Asuka/Atlus team, *Cosmo Tank* for the Game Boy, was released earlier this year.

Activision, Philips Reach Settlement Agreement

Philips/Magnavox has agreed to a settlement plan by Activision that gives the veteran video-game manufacturer three years to pay off their indebtedness.

Magnavox was awarded damages in a patent-infringement suit concerning eleven Activision video-game cartridges. As reported earlier in VG&CE (August 1990) the suit stemmed from pioneering work done by Ralph Baer, the "father of video games." Working through the Lawrence Saunders Institute, under contract from Magnavox, to find alternate entertainment uses for television sets, he created the first home video game. The Magnavox Company subsequently obtained a patent for the paddle-and-ball techniques Baer invented.

Activision/Mediagenic will pay Philips/Magnavox $150,000 a month for three years, and a balloon payment of an undisclosed amount is due in December 1993.

Nintendo Postpones Financial Services Network

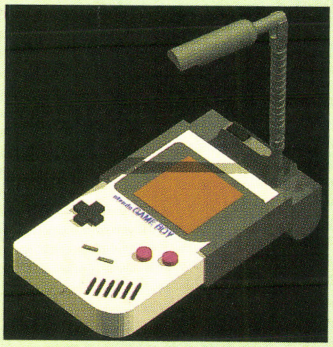
Nintendo dropped its plans to work with Fidelity Investments on an online financial services packages that would have been accessible from the Nintendo Entertainment System Network. According to company spokesmen, the user-interface cartridge needed hasn't yet been developed. However, the company does expect to put together a brokerage/financial services deal in the future, with some other investment company.

At the same time, Nintendo postponed its online network from its original target date of mid-1990 to an unspecified date in 1991. In previous announcements Nintendo promised an NES Network package including a modem, communications cartridge and software, that will allow NESers to tap into services such as stock purchasing, trading and home banking. There is no further information currently available about the planned network.

Bright Light for Game Boy

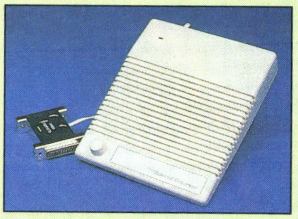
Nintendo's Game Boy is currently the most popular hand-held programmable video-game player, but it does have one drawback. To make entertainments visible it requires that a bright light shine on the screen.

The Illuminator has the answer for anyone who wants to play with their Game Boy in less than full sunshine. It slides over the Game Boy for stability then angles a tensor-rotating light, powered by two AA batteries, over the screen. The lamp folds down for compact storage. It should be available by Christmas from Greer & Associates (Hayward, California, [800] 426-5767) for $19.95.



Sound Source Gives Disney New Voice

Walt Disney Computer Software introduced The Sound Source, an accessory that produces digitized speech, music and sound effects for IBM PC and



compatible computers. The $35 system, produced for Disney by Electronic Speech Systems of California, attaches to the printer port, then amplifies sound through its own three-inch speaker.

The first products to use The Sound Source are three preschool products, *Mickey's 123s, Mickey's ABCs* and *Mickey's Colors and Shapes.*

NEVER BEFORE HAS A FORCE OF ONE BEEN SO POWERFUL!

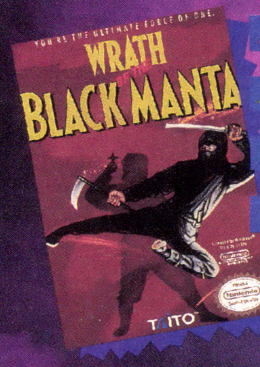
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WRATH OF THE BLACK MANTA

Crime and kidnapping have put a death grip on New York, Tokyo and Rio. A solitary figure strives to squelch the misguided dealings of a bunch of underhanded terrorists bent on kidnapping innocent kids. Only the Black Manta possesses the powers that can save them.

- ✳ Master the awesome power of ten magical, Ninpo martial arts
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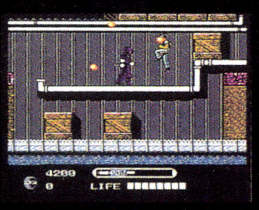


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Adventure!
Mystery!
Intrigue!

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Rated 4 out of 5 for graphics and sound, challenge and theme/fun on the Power Player Meter!

Nintendo Power, March/April 1990

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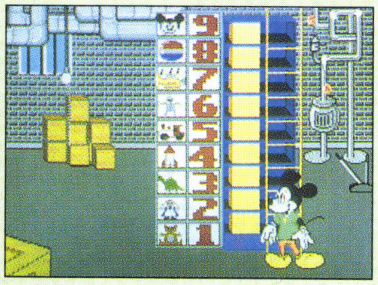
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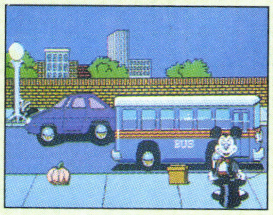
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Future Disney Software will be compatible with The Sound Source.

In an associated announcement, Disney inked an exclusive agreement with Electronic Speech Systems to be the licensing agent for ESS speech-compression technology. The ESS technology will combine with the Disney Sound Source to produce digitized speech, orchestrated music and real-life sound effects.







Turbo Zone Opens in California

Turbo Zone, Inc., an independent retailer, joined with NEC Technologies to open the first video-game store to exclusively carry the TurboGrafx-16 and its auxiliary products. The first Turbo Zone opened in mid-July at the Serramonte Shopping Center in Daly City, California, and additional store openings are scheduled nationwide.

The store is housed in a mini-mall kiosk, and features the entire TurboGrafx-16 product line, including the system, TurboChip game cards and accessories. Shoppers are treated to previews on the eight TV monitors provided and can test the 28 titles currently available for purchase. They'll also be able to preview new games as they come out.

Turbo Zone stores are to be manned by trained personnel familiar with the products. In addition to the shopping center outlets, Turbo Zone will also start a nationwide club for TG-16 users.

"Turbo Zone will help differentiate the TurboGrafx-16 line with a unique level of local customer support," according to Ken Wirt, NEC's vice-president of home entertainment. He went on to boast, "No other industry contender in the video-game market is providing this kind of sales support for its products."

Atari Gives and Takes

Atari Games Corporation has repurchased all its stock presently owned by Namco America Inc., a subsidiary of Namco Ltd., Japan, one of Japan's biggest manufacturers of video games.

If both sides agree, Atari Games, Atari's coin-op corporation, will also buy back all its shares from Namco Ltd., and in return Namco Ltd. will receive ownership in Atari Operations Inc., which operates 40 video-game arcades located throughout the southern United States.

Atari Games feels the repurchase of stock and sale of Atari Operations will open up new business opportunities in Japan and the Far East and could be beneficial to both parties.

Accessories for Hand-Helds Keep the Fun Clean

The MegaBoy Cleaning Kit, from Doc's High Tech Game Products (Rialto, California; [714] 873-1967) contains cleaning solution, cleaning cards, applicators, polishing wand and an illustrated manual for maintaining Game Boy or Lynx.

If you are tired of buying batteries, Doc's MegaBoy or MegaLynx A.C. Adaptor or Doc's MegaBoy or MegaLynx Auto Power keeps the action lively without them. The Adaptor comes with a 10-foot cord so the gamer can move around. The Auto Power plugs into a car's cigarette lighter outlet and has a six-foot cord. Doc's MegaBoy or MegaLynx Charge-It Battery Packs are cost-control devices: Each provides roughly ten hours of play before it has to be recharged.

Doc's MegaLynx Protector stores the Lynx and up to nine games, as well as earphones, cables and other peripherals. The padded case has a strap for over-the-shoulder, around-the-waist or handle carrying. Doc's MegaBoy Protector holds the system, plus six Game Boy cartridges and peripherals.

Good Memory Will Win Trip to Sierra

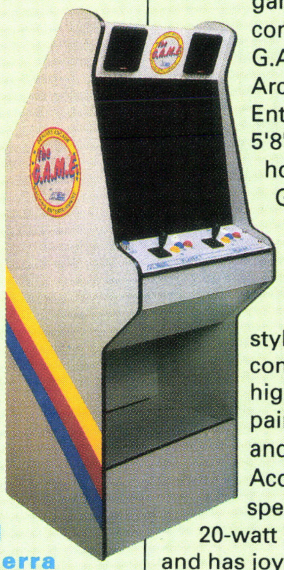
Sierra On-Line, celebrating the tenth anniversary of the founding of the software company, is marking the occasion with a "Come Home and Meet the Family" contest. Sierra has marketed more than 100 games during the past ten years, and the entrant with the most complete list of their products will win a trip to the company's headquarters in exotic Coarsegold, California. (In case of duplicate entries, a random drawing will select the winner.)

To enter, type or print the names of as many Sierra or On-Line products as possible, alphabetize the list (put numbers before letters, and list games starting with "The" in the "T" group). Send the list, along with your name, address and phone number, to Sierra Family Contest, Box 1103, Oakhurst, CA 93644, before October 1, 1990.

The winner can take immediate family members (up to four people) on the weekend excursion, which will include a tour of the facilities, a chance to meet the Sierra designers, dinner with Ken and Roberta Williams and an armload of software prizes.

Cabinet Turns Vid-Games Into Home Arcade

Arcade Masters, Inc. (Cromwell, Connecticut; [800] 648-2636), has a cabinet for gaming connoisseurs. The G.A.M.E. (Genuine Arcade Machine Entertainment) is a 5'8" cabinet that can house a Sega Genesis, NEC TurboGrafx-16 or Nintendo NES.



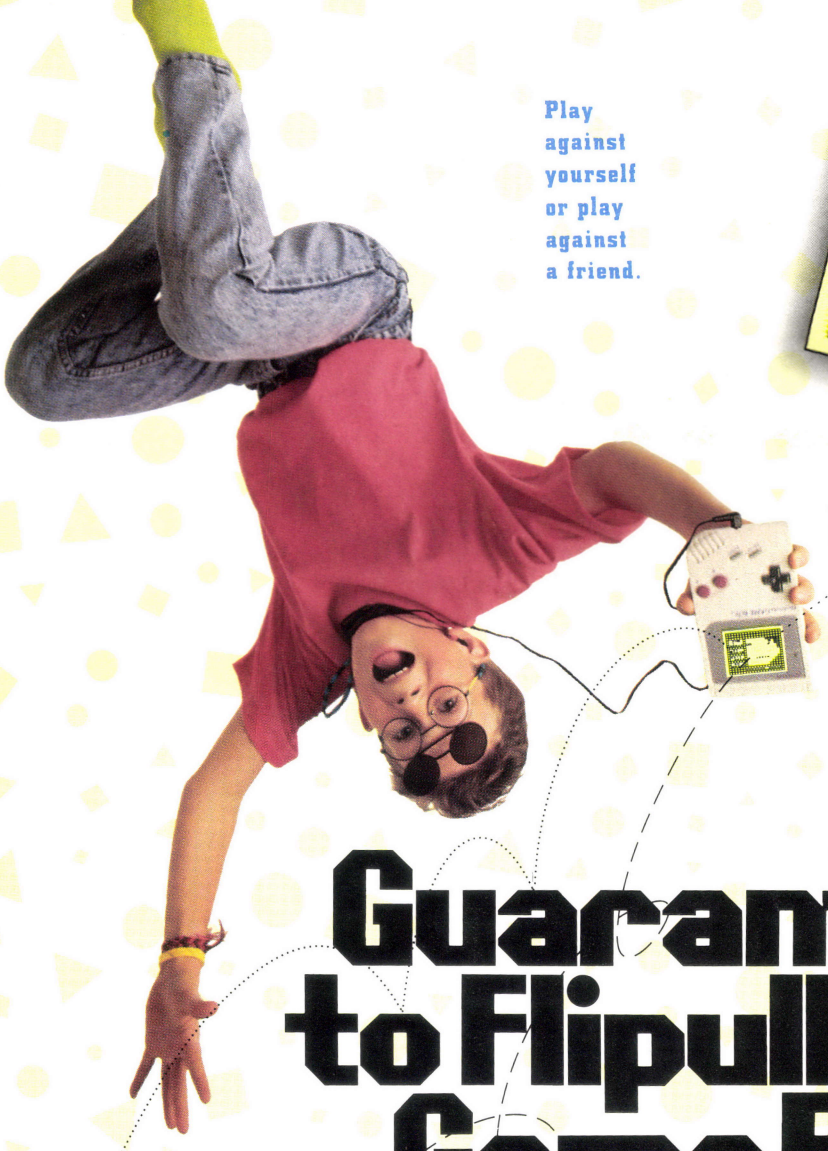
The arcade-style cabinet comes complete with a 19" high-res monitor, two pairs of controllers and a pair of Boston Acoustics 757 speakers. It contains a 20-watt stereo amplifier and has joystick connectors for all video-game units. It also has inputs for a CD player, tape deck, VCR or any other equipment.

The deluxe game room accessory will retail for around $2,000.

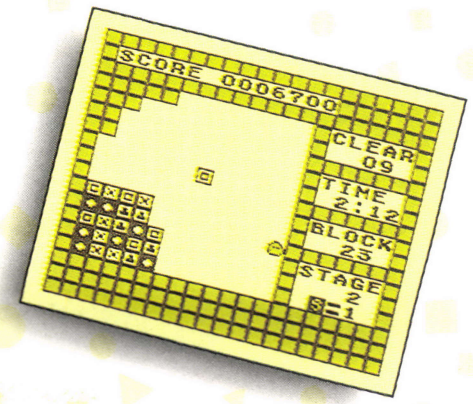
CopyHolder Ends Map-Reading Blues

Hunt Data Products is marketing an accessory that puts an end to those map-in-the-lap blues experienced by adventure gamers who don't have three hands. The MediaMate CopyHolder holds maps, instruction cards or any other data that needs to be visible, leaving the gamer's hands free for fun.

The CopyHolder attaches to any monitor, and a roller bar holds documents securely. It has three height settings and adjusts left or right to suit individual taste. It's available at most computer stores or direct from Hunt Data Products at (800) 446-7823.



Play against yourself or play against a friend.



50 levels of uncontrollable cubical craziness in every game.

Blow out multiple cubes of the same kind to rack up big bonus points!

Guaranteed to Flipull™ your Game Boy.™

Don't let your blob get bonked or it's all over!

Knock out enough cubes before the clock runs out and you're a winner.

You'll turn your brain upside down as you attempt to turn your Game Boy right side up!



FLIPULL for Game Boy.

Magical cubes give you the power to break open tricky patterns.

Also coming for Game Boy: Space Invaders®



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Video Exec Honored

Acclaim's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Gregory Fischbach was named "Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year" for the Long Island region. The prestigious award is part of the National Entrepreneur of the Year competition sponsored by Ernst & Young, *Inc.* magazine and Merrill Lynch.

Fischbach's distinguished career began with the U.S. Justice Dept. He next practiced entertainment law as an advisor for many music personalities, record and video companies. In 1983 he joined Activision, then became president of RCA Records International in 1986. In 1987 he became one of the founders of Acclaim Entertainment, Inc.

The "Entrepreneur of the Year" competition honors executives whose ingenuity, hard work and perseverance have created successful businesses. Regional winners are inducted into the Institute of American Entrepreneurs.

Top Coin-Ops of June 1990

Figures courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Konami
2. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
3. *Mercs* by Capcom
4. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
5. *Beast Busters* by SNK
6. *2-Dude Off Road* by Leland
7. *Final Lap* by Atari
8. *Cyberball 2072* by Atari
9. *Big Run* by Jaleco
10. *Off Road* by Leland

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Final Fight* by Capcom
2. *D.J. Boy* by American Sammy
3. *WWF Superstars* by American Technos
4. *Cadash* by Taito
5. *Aliens* by Konami
6. *MVP* by Sega
7. *Off Road Trak Pak* by Leland
8. *Air Buster* by Sharp Image
9. *Violence Fight* by Taito
10. *Golden Axe* by Sega

Best New Uprights

1. *G-LOC* by Sega
2. *WGP* by Taito
3. *Four Trax* by Atari
4. *Super Masters* by Sega
5. *Line of Fire* by Sega

Controller Lets Special Kids Play NES

Nintendo has a way for handicapped people to play NES games. The NES Hands Free Controller fits any size thanks to adjustable Velcro straps and variable-sized joystick shafts and chin rests.

Physically impaired gamers control on-screen action with a foam-covered cup or ball that is moved by the chin. Blowing air in and out of the "sip and puff" tube permits game play without the use of arms or hands. Good motor control of the jaw or head and good breath



control is required.

The Hands Free Controller weighs about 2 1/2 pounds. VG&CE editors found it easy to use, lightweight and comfortable, with good on-screen control.

The NES Hands Free Controller is available from Nintendo for $175.

New Owner Gets Time Out

Time Out, a chain of 88 arcades, was sold by Sega of Japan to Edison Bros. Stores of St. Louis, Missouri. The *Time Out* pay-for-play palaces brings the number of entertainment operations owned by Edison to 140 establishments in 30 states.

Edison is a long-time clothes and shoe marketer, but the company has recently established an entertainment division and is aggressively building their foothold in the amusement industry. Among the acquisitions by the merchandising firm are Dave & Busters', a combination restaurant/entertainment establishment located in Dallas. Edison also acquired Adventure Properties, Ltd., a chain of 48 "Space Port" arcades, earlier this year.

Michael Jordan to Co-Design Games

Chicago Bulls star Michael Jordan will co-design a line of video and computer games with Electronic Arts. The roundball star will help develop several new titles for play on the NES as well as other systems.

Jordan is no stranger to computer gaming. The first game he developed with Electronic Arts (*Jordan vs. Bird: One on One*) has sold more than a million copies. When questioned about the new games that will bear his likeness, he said, "I love video games, and I really like to get involved in helping design them...especially because my personal style gets incorporated into each game."

Electronic Arts plans to team with Jordan in developing a series of games that will appear in video, computer and hand-held formats, starting in the spring of next year.



New Cleaning Product Won't Harm Ozone

Geneva Group (Plymouth, Minnesota; [612] 546-5620) just introduced a new cleaning product to help gamers keep their equipment tidy without doing damage to the Earth's ozone layer. The Super Blast air duster is an ozone-safe product, propelled with a nonflammable, nontoxic formula. It expels air at a steady velocity through a long pinpoint nozzle, to blow dirt and lint out of keyboards and video-game slots, which otherwise could do damage to the equipment. The VR-109 Super Blast is available for $10.99 in most game stores.

The company also has a CD lens cleaner and a new manual cleaner for compact and laser disks, also for use on CD-ROM disks. The Manual Compact Disk Cleaner uses chamois pads and a special cleaning solution and comes with a no-scratch holding pad. The Turbo Disc CD Lens Cleaner uses air turbulence, so no brushes or components actually touch the lenses. It chimes during the process and automatically shuts itself off when the cleaning is finished.

Philips Consumer Electronics Cleans Up

A clean PC is a happy PC. Philips Computer Electronics has developed a maintenance system with everything needed to keep your personal computer performing at its best. The system SBM10007X01 includes special head-cleaning material; 3.5" and 5.25" cleaning diskettes; cleaning solutions for your CRT, disk drives, keyboard and printer platen; swabs, towelettes and a complete instruction manual.

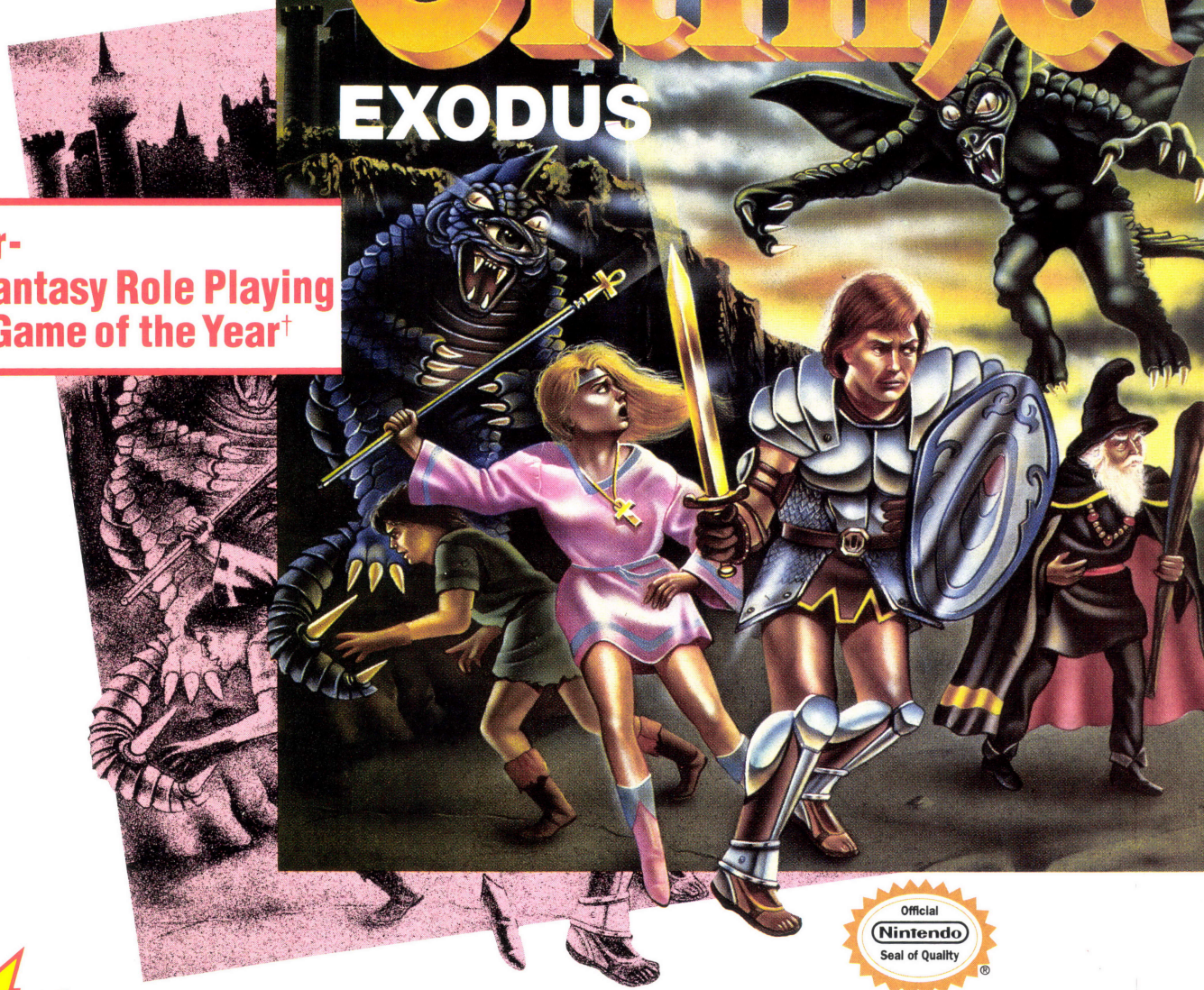
Rebecca Alexander, marketing manager at Philips says of the system, "Our kit contains all the right materials in one handy package to make sure the job is done right—and safely." Philips' dual-drive computer-care kit retails for $49.95.

Only four people can save the Kingdom.

You are all of them!

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Best Fantasy Role Playing Video Game of the Year†

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Ever since the evil sorcerers Mondain and Minax were banished, the citizens of Britannia have enjoyed peace. But now—twenty years later—they're back. And out for revenge!

You handpick the team of four valiant warriors. Their Mission: restore peace to the kingdom. You choose their skills. You select their weapons. And then set out across treacherous terrain, battling fierce enemies and evil spells. It'll take all of your wits, all of your fighting skills...and maybe a little magic. Are you ready for a real role playing challenge?

- **Ability to create your own characters**
- **5 year lithium battery saves scores and game positions**
- **Three different games can be saved individually for future play**
- **Over 100 hours of game time**

*Send the UPC Bar Codes from any two FCI games with your size, name, address, zip code, and $2 postage and handling in an envelope to this address: FCI T-SHIRT OFFER, PO Box 669508, Charlotte, NC 28266. Adult sizes only: S, M, L, XL. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Offer good through Dec. 31, 1990, or while supplies last.

GET THE HINT!

THE ULTIMA HINT BOOK
Get the tips and tricks that can help both beginners and experts to complete their quest. This 64 page full-color handbook of Ultima's secrets is only $8 wherever you buy video games. To order by credit card, call toll-free (800) 422-9001 Ext. 576.

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† Game Players Magazine, 1989

CIRCLE #113 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



JUST KEEP TELLING YOURSELF:

IT'S ONLY A VIDEO GAME...

ONLY A VIDEO GAME...

ONLY A VIDEO GAME...

It started as a college field trip to an old and somehow evil mansion. You just wanted to study the gruesome experiments of the world's most renowned, yet twisted parapsychologist.

Then, things started going wrong. Terribly wrong.

The last things you remember were a blood curdling scream and a dull thwack to the back of your skull.

You awaken to find someone or something has taken your girlfriend, and to save her you'll have to slaughter seven levels of monstrous ghouls.

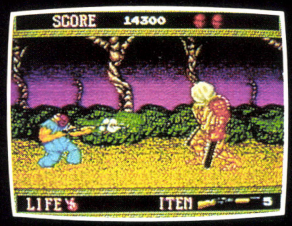
You're about to find out exactly why this horrible place is called Splatterhouse.

And why no one has ever entered, and lived long enough to talk about it.

RHOUSE



To get a ghoul's attention, try a two-by-four to the head. (The slime stains should come out in the wash.)



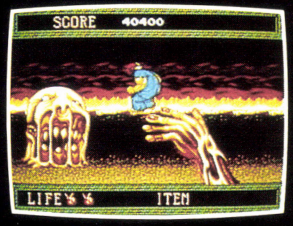
He's got a chainsaw. You've got a 12-gauge shotgun. Who will cut who in half?



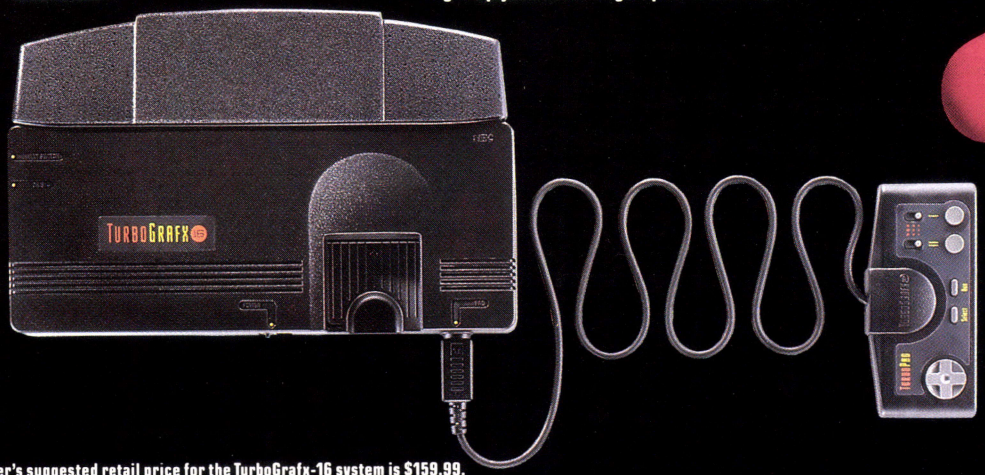
Punch and kick the bloody guts before they suck the life out of you. That surgical get-up you're wearing is quite attractive.



Killing the head is tough. To have a ghost of a chance, try the two-by-four again.



How tough is this maggot-eaten boss? You've got to give him a hand, he uses his head.



TURBO 16 GRAFX

NEC

Manufacturer's suggested retail price for the TurboGrafx-16 system is $159.99.

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CIRCLE #114 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

A View Into High-Tech Battle With Konami's

LASER SCOPE

BY ANDY EDDY

Current Nintendo Entertainment Systems come with a combination cartridge that has the ever-popular *Super Mario Bros.* on it, a game that's still a favorite with many NES owners. But the other game on that cartridge—outside Power Set systems—is *Duck Hunt*, a game players all too often pass by as too simple. *Duck Hunt* is designed for use with the Nintendo Zapper, a light gun that comes with the NES.

A light gun isn't really a gun at all in that it doesn't shoot anything at the screen, but instead "reads" the screen for a block of white when the trigger is pulled. (Look carefully when you shoot the Zapper, and you'll see that the screen goes black for a moment, and the "target" is replaced by a white square.) If the Zapper gun is pointed at that square when the shot is "fired," it will tell the NES, and a hit will be registered.

Because it's necessary to have an inexpensive gun to keep the system costs down, possible aiming deficiencies may result from its manufacture, discouraging the use of the gun from the advised distance of over six feet away. What happens is that most Zapper users defeat the aiming process by standing right next to the screen and pointing the gun directly at the target. There's no fear of poor scores with this strategy, and anyone can quickly become a high-tech sharpshooter. But it results in very little excitement for the player.

What's needed is something that boosts the level of excitement, and imagination in hardware development abounds in the NES world. Though both devices are actually more difficult to use than a standard control pad, for instance, Brøderbund's U-FORCE and Mattel's Power Glove brought the player's movements into the game, translating them into on-screen motions. There are even games being custom-designed to address the strengths of this pair of innovations.

If only this same innovation could be used with the Zapper. Imagine being able to aim the gun without having to sight over the gun, harking back to the $6-Million Dollar Man, whose bionic eyesight could zero in on targets easily. Also imagine not having to pull a trigger, instead trying the method Clint Eastwood used in the movie *Firefox*, launching a missile by just speaking the command.

Enter Konami's Laser Scope, a Zapper replacement that traces its roots to the Middle East, to a Tel Aviv-based company called Megama. The Laser Scope fills the wishes we just described by putting the gun into a feature-filled helmet, rather than a handheld pistol. When you slip on the Laser Scope and plug it into the NES, you become more a part of the game than before: It takes your head movements and makes it easier to aim your "gun."

In front of your right eye hangs a sloped slice of plastic. Without obstructing your vision, a laser in the helmet beams a light-red crosshair onto this plastic and, seemingly, in front of you. (An IBM-compatible device, The Private Eye from Reflection Technology, uses a similar technology to display the screen "in front" of the user, who wears the device on a head-

GET WITH THE PROGRAM!



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You answer first but nobody hears you. Or so you thought.

GameTek was listening! And now, you can be part of the action ...practically right in the studio! GameTek has captured all of the excitement of the original programs on computer software. Each program was designed in full cooperation with the producers of each show to ensure that every game is packed with all the thrills and supense of the original program!

Tune in to GameTek software, and get with the program!

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CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

band.) By turning his head from side to side in a natural motion, the player can sight up targets by simply overlaying the crosshairs on the image.

But how do you shoot this target if there's no trigger to pull? In a way, there is a trigger, though it's not a physical one that you use with your finger. To help, the helmet has a small adjustable microphone that you place near your mouth. With a word—whether it's "fire," "shoot" or "oatmeal"—the Laser Scope will send a signal to the NES to "fire" at the point where the crosshairs are in your vision.

Again, the Laser Scope uses the same technology as we previously described for the Zapper, with some changes. Looking carefully at the front of the helmet, a small lens can be seen pointing away from the player and toward the screen. The crosshair display is carefully locked to the actual light-gun device, which is housed behind this lens. When the microphone detects a sound above a certain threshold (which is adjustable), a signal is sent to the NES, replicating the process a physical trigger would cause.

In addition to the obvious benefits, the Laser Scope also has some hidden bonuses that aren't as apparent when you consider the operation of this device. For instance, the helmet not only has an NES-compatible connector on it, which ties it to the NES in the same manner as the Zapper, but also a cable that lets you plug it into the audio jack of the NES. This feeds the sounds and music from the game into the stereo headphones built into the Laser Scope. In fact, you can hook the Laser Scope to a device with an 1/8-inch jack, like a personal stereo or Game Boy, and use the headphones in a similar manner. (The sight can be removed from the Laser Scope to make the whole unit less bulky and more resemblant to headphones.)





Konami's Laser Scope is a Zapper replacement that sits comfortably atop your head. By simply moving your head, crosshairs (overlaid in your view path via the slanted plastic in front of your right eye) let you easily track on-screen enemies. Triggering is accomplished by speaking into the microphone.

In addition, the makers of the Laser Scope have put a couple of controls on the side of the helmet. One is the necessary volume control that lets you adjust the amount of sound coming through the headphone speakers. Another is a switch that flips the headphones between monophonic (for NES games) and true stereo (for personal stereos and Game Boy, for example). Finally, the last switch changes the firing from a single-shot weapon to a rapid-fire machine gun. In this configuration, triggering the weapon with a voice command would allow you to spray the screen with fire, helpful for a game like *Operation Wolf* that requires massive amounts of shooting.

Most of you reading this no doubt have the same question VG&CE's editors had when we were first shown the Laser Scope at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago this past June: Where are all the Zapper games that will make the purchase of a $39.95 gun worthwhile? According to our count, there are currently in the range of 12 Zapper-compatible games, but Konami is going to spruce that up by designing more cartridges that will take advantage of the Zapper—and, therefore, the Laser Scope.

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CIRCLE #116 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



REMEMBER WHEN

MOMMY TOLD YOU NOT TO

PLAY WITH FIRE?

MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED.

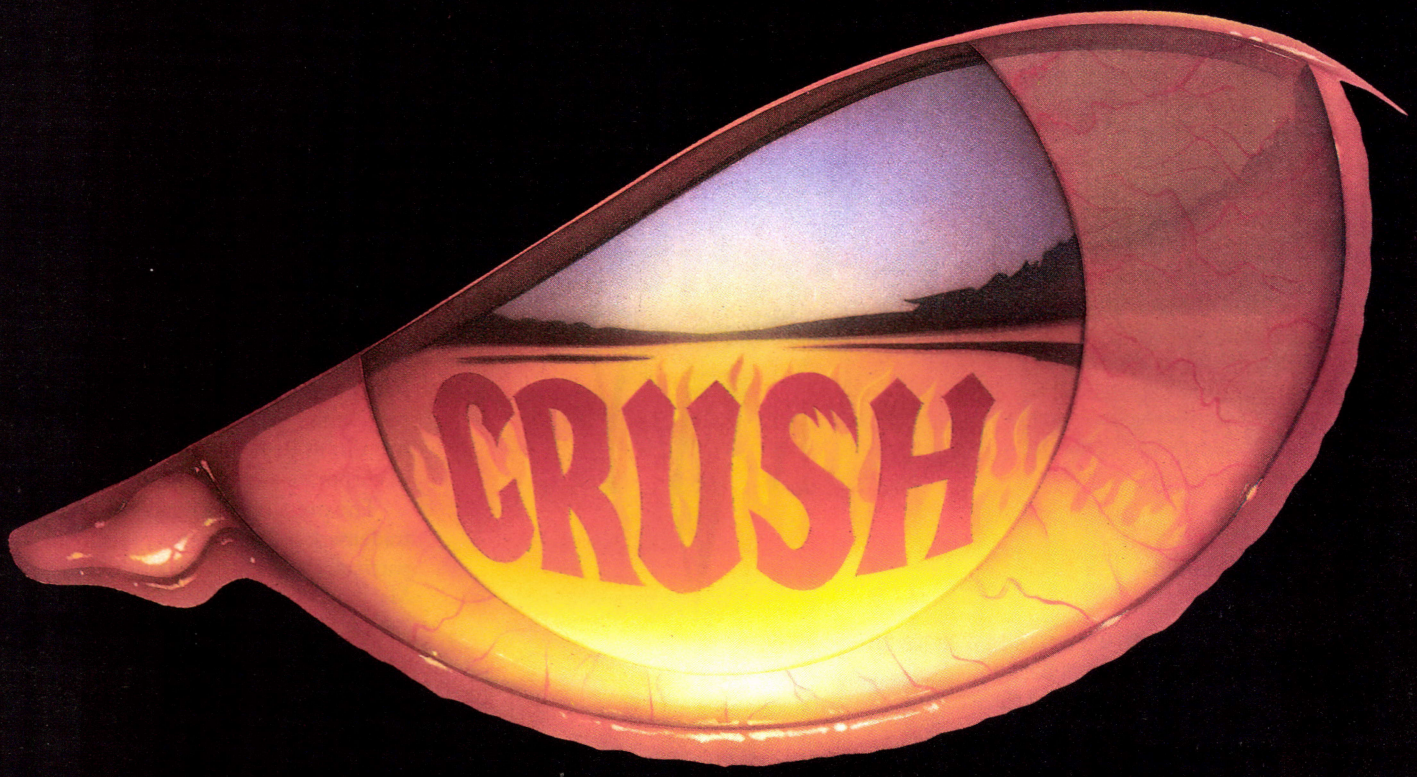
She'll say, "If you play Devil's Crush video pinball in the underworld, you'll get horribly burned."

And you will.

You'll probably get fried many times while locked in immortal battle with the Devil's elite guards. The dragons will roast you. The skeletons will toast you. The sorcerers will plan a barbecue around you.

But you'll have to flip your way past all of them to fight the ultimate Armageddon with the Devil himself.

The big Kahuna awaits.

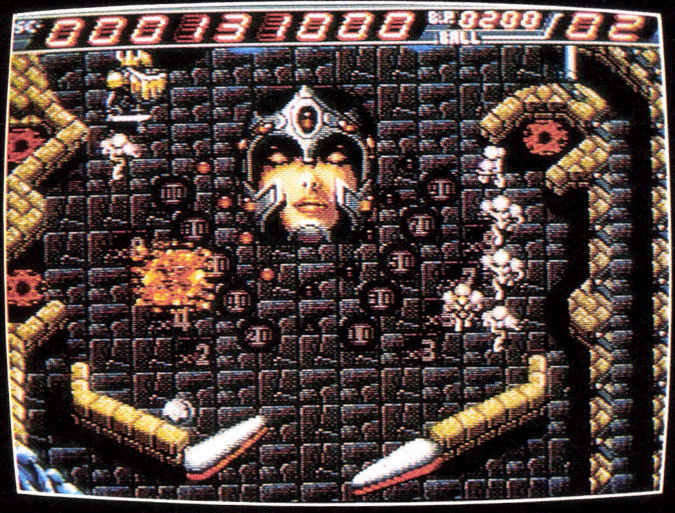




This happy skeleton keeps an eye on you and laughs like a demonic clown when you die.



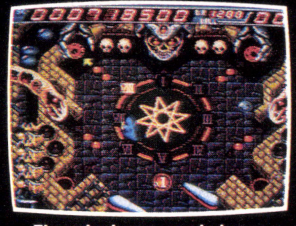
The 5-headed dragon spits fire and brimstone at your pinballs.



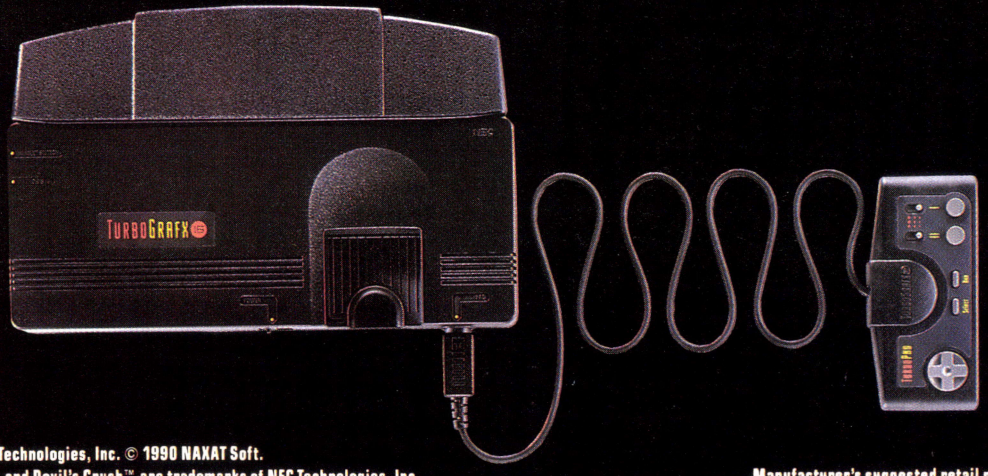
There she is. The She Giant. So beautiful when she sleeps. Such an evil skag when she awakens.



Could this be the evil skag prophesied in an earlier caption?



The robed-ones can help you focus your rage.



TURBO 16 GRAFX

NEC

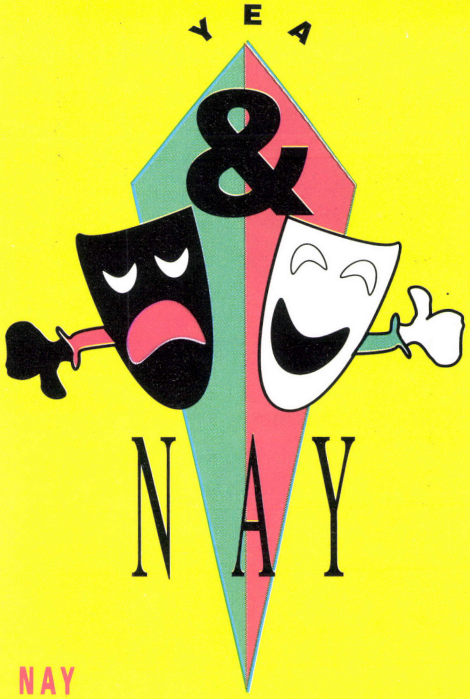
© 1990 NEC Technologies, Inc. © 1990 NAXAT Soft.
TurboGrafx™ and Devil's Crush™ are trademarks of NEC Technologies, Inc.

Manufacturer's suggested retail price for the TurboGrafx-16 system is $159.99.

CIRCLE #117 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

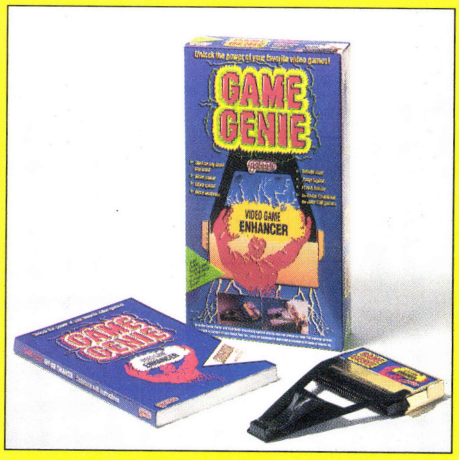
Yea & Nay *is an inside look at the high and low points in the electronic-game industry. It's an opportunity for the companies that decide what games we'll be playing to be patted on the back or slammed to the mat for what they do.*

If you want to give credit where credit is due—whether the company belongs in the Hall of Fame or Hall of Shame—send your opinions to **VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Yea & Nay.** *Let's hear how you feel!*



NAY

Last month we wrote that Nintendo and Galoob Toys were embroiled in a legal battle over the Game Genie, a device billed as a "video-game enhancer" (see *Summer CES Highlights*, VG&CE, September 1990). As we write this, Nintendo has already won (on June 29) a temporary restraining order against Galoob preventing the toy company from advertising or selling the Game Genie, pending the outcome of a trial thats date isn't set yet.



VG&CE has spent extensive time in the labs messing with the Game Genie, and we've come to the conclusion that Nintendo's complaints don't hold much water, particularly its concern that the Game Genie would affect the market for video-game sequels. However off base Nintendo's claims might have been, they must have been satisfactory enough for a judge to rule in their favor, at least temporarily.

We're disturbed at the legal lengths that Nintendo has gone to to hinder competition, but wish Galoob luck in the next step: an appeal of the temporary restraining order in a higher court in time to release the Game Genie by Christmas if the decision is overturned.

YEA

At the same time, Sega has taken its Master System and repackaged it into a lower priced console, with *Alex Kidd in Enchanted Castle* built-in.



This sets up Sega's 8-bit line as a painless and economical way for more people to get into video games. We all know that the SMS has always been more powerful technically over the NES, but the NES licensed the better titles and, therefore, took control of the video-game market.

YEA

We received an interesting fax at the VG&CE offices recently, from a company we didn't expect to hear from. A press release from Philip Morris USA, which is best known for various cigarette brands, such as Marlboro, Benson & Hedges and Virginia Slims, detailed the company's efforts to prevent its trademarks from appearing—without permission—on children's products. "If you use our trademarks on products for kids, we'll see you in court," are the stern words from John R. Nelson, vice-president of corporate affairs for Philip Morris.

The press release details past trademark infringements of its logos, particularly the highly identifiable Marlboro logo, on kids' products such as clothing, coin-operated rides and toy vehicles. On a more related front, quite a stink was raised earlier this year over Sega's use of a symbol uncomfortably close to that of the Marlboro logo in its *Super Monaco GP* arcade game. The logos were later removed from the game and replacement chips sent out.

It's nice to see a company putting its money where its mouth is, and Philip Morris is intending to spend around $500,000 in a trade-magazine campaign to let everyone know they are mad and won't stand for it. Bravo!

NAY

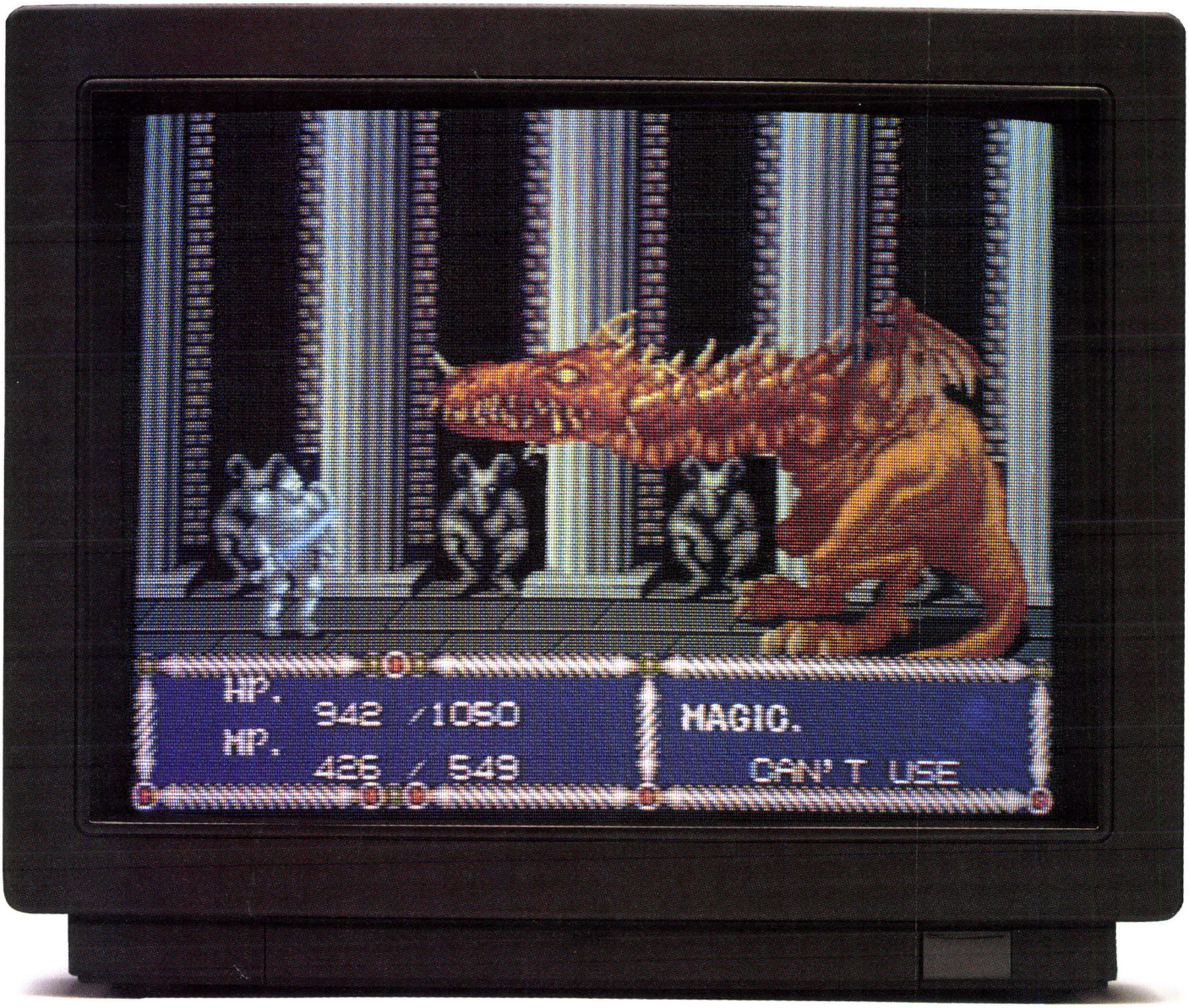
We reported in this issue's *News Bits* that Nintendo has announced the impending release of the Super Famicom, which apparently will be called the SFX here. Unfortunately, Nintendo hasn't set a date for release of the SFX in America, though judging by the fact that certain American developers have received details on the machine—particularly how to program it—VG&CE expects to see the console appear here by Christmas 1991.

At the same time, we're not sure why Nintendo would wait or not make it known when the product can be expected here. The Genesis and TurboGrafx-16—not to mention SNK's Neo•Geo, detailed in last month's VG&CE—will have a great head start on the next-generation video-game machines.

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WHAT NIN

INTRODUCING THE SV

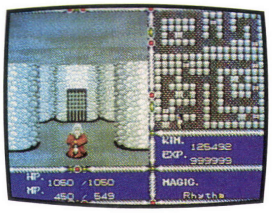


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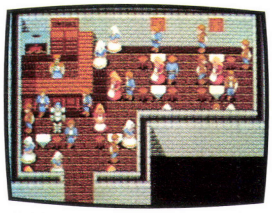
WORD OF VERMILION.™



1. You start your journey in a village, meet shopkeepers, buy supplies, weapons, and trade-in your armor for magic potions.



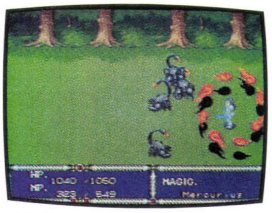
2. In the dungeons you meet a motley crew of characters, all seen from your point-of-view. On the right you see an overview of the whole area.



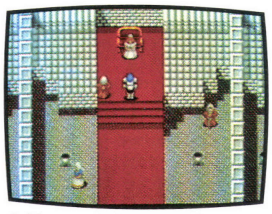
3. You go inside buildings and find customers walking around you can talk to. For more help, enter a store, house or sacred place.



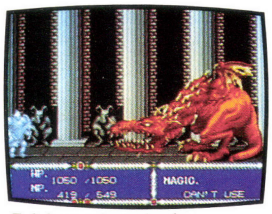
4. Inside a building you defend yourself with a sword of gold against hooded wizards sent by the evil Tsarkon.



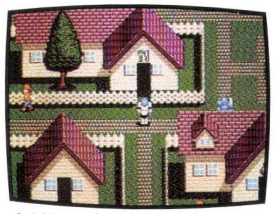
5. When you're making your way through the forest to the next town, you are attacked by scorpions which you defeat with a circle of magic.



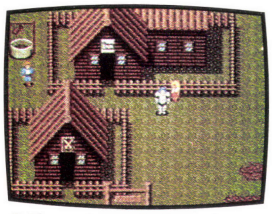
6. You meet the mysterious Princess amidst all the pomp of this ancient court. Her two evil chamberlains are advising her against you.



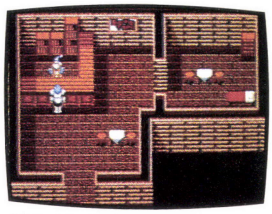
7. Advance into the fray against the dragon wielding your sword of diamonds, using your controller and fighting in real time.



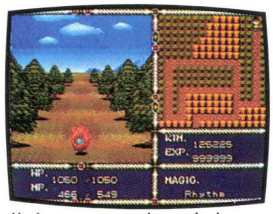
8. Weary from your journey, you arrive at a restaurant where you can eat. Look out for poison.



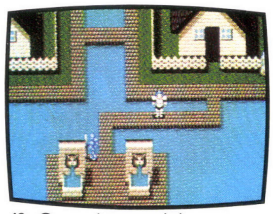
9. You arrive at the Inn, where you can find out important information about what lies ahead. Be careful about who you trust.



10. Inside the Inn, you can rest and recover from battles, recuperate your health and replenish your magic points.



11. As you move through the forest between towns, you encounter a fireball which you must extinguish or destroy using the Magic of the elements.



12. Gargoyles guard the watery entrance to the floating village of Cartahena. Careful, there are more bad guys hiding in the dungeon outside town.

You're playing the most complex, most challenging adventure-role playing video game ever made—The Sword of Vermilion.™ Complete with battery backup—you'll enjoy over 300 hours of nonstop gameplay as you use maps and playing hints provided from a 100-page instruction book to get you through 14 winding mazes and 14 exotic towns. Plus you'll battle your enemies in real time. And when you explore the countryside and dungeons, the screen displays them from your own personal point of view.

In the world of The Sword of Vermilion,™ your father, Erik the Fifth of Excalabria, was killed by the evil Tsarkon of Cartahena. Your father's trusted servant Blade took you into safekeeping as a baby, and now eighteen years later, it's your mission to restore yourself and peace to the Kingdom.

In your quest, you must find the Eight Rings of Good, look for the Book of Fighting Spells, mix magic potions from ingredients you must collect and use them to ward off the evil minions of Tsarkon.

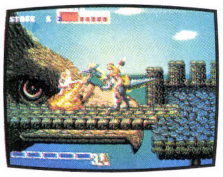
Explore Watling, Stow and Keltwick. Meet Mordegarde the Wizard and Bearwulf the loyal shield bearer. The Sword of Vermilion™ on Genesis from Sega®... You can't do this on Nintendo.®

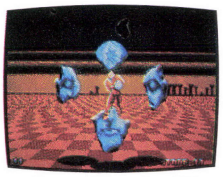


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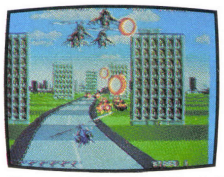
GENESIS DOES IT ALL.

ARCADE GAMES:


Golden Axe™


Space Harrier II™


Super Hang-On™

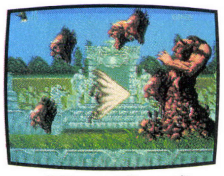

Super Thunder Blade™



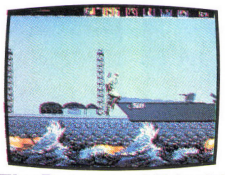
Cyberball™

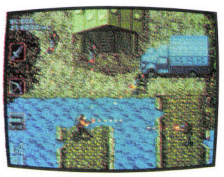


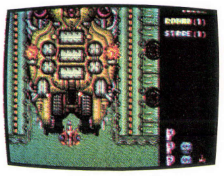
Michael Jackson's Moonwalker™

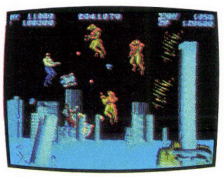

Altered Beast™


Ghouls 'n Ghosts™


The Revenge of Shinobi™


Rambo III®


Truxton™


Forgotten Worlds™

ADVENTURE GAMES:



Super Monaco GP™



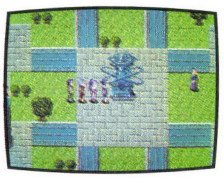
E-S.W.A.T. City Under Siege™



Afterburner II™



Strider™

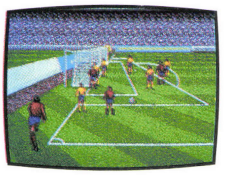

Phantasy Star II™



The Sword of Vermillion™

SPORTS GAMES:


Tommy Lasorda Baseball™


World Championship Soccer™


Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf™



Pat Riley's Basketball™

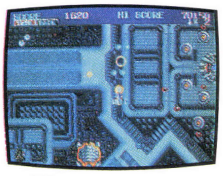


James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing™



Joe Montana Football™

ACTION GAMES:

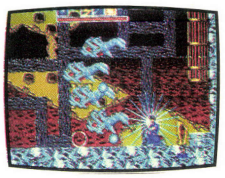

Thunder Force II™

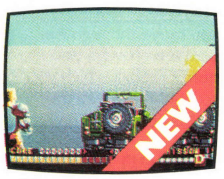


Ghostbusters II™


Alex Kidd: Enchanted Castle™

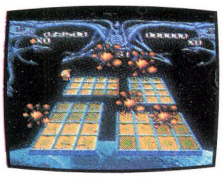

Last Battle™


Mystic Defender™



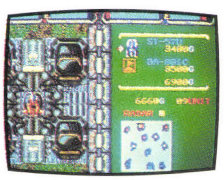
Dynamite Duke™

STRATEGY/PUZZLE GAMES:

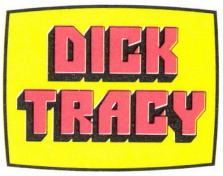

Zoom!™



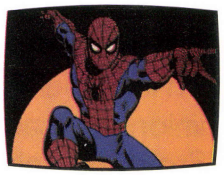
Columns™


Herzog Zwei™

COMING SOON:



Dick Tracy®


Spider-Man®



Wrestle War™

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CIRCLE #118 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

TV Sports: Football

CINEMAWARE

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

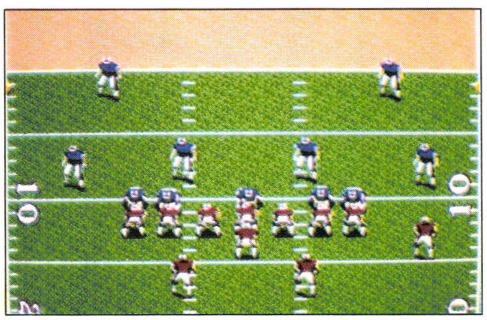
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Blue 59, blue 59! Hut hut! The Buzzard's quarterback drops back...he's under pressure and scrambling! He's stripped of the ball, and the Hurricanes recover on the Buzzard's 25! Attention armchair quarterbacks, Cinemaware has come to your rescue with the first TurboGrafx-16 football simulation.

TV Sports: Football is another offering that first appeared on personal computers and is making its way into home-gaming systems. This version doesn't have all the features of the computer version—such as creating and modifying your own teams and players, and it doesn't go into the detail of the computer version, but it's otherwise faithful to the original.







You'll quickly become engrossed by the challenge and look of Cinemaware's version of *TV Sports: Football* for the TurboGrafx-16.

Up to five players may compete on any of eight different teams, with a maximum of four players on any one team. Each team has its particular strengths and weaknesses, depending upon each player's speed, stamina, hands and agility.

If you crave a quick game, an exhibition option will let you pick a team for both you and the computer. On the other hand, if you're feeling a bit more ambitious, a full season may be in order, with ten weeks of regular season games, plus playoffs and the league championship.

When playing a full season, a password feature is included that will allow you to continue the season when it's convenient. If you don't feel like playing a particular game, a "simulated" game may be enacted, which will immediately give the results without actually playing.

After the kickoff, a play-selection screen is presented with various formations and patterns for both offense and defense. A time-out may also be called if time is running short. Both sides have four different formations that each have additional options within themselves.

On offense, a "Pro-Set," "Shotgun" or "I-formation" may be chosen, each with four various running and passing plays available for that formation. A "kick" option allows punting, fake punting and field goals when your team is within range. On defense, players may choose the 3-4, 5-2, 6-1 or "Special" formations. With the first three, inside or outside running defenses, a passing defense or a blitz is available to slow down your opponent. Special formations consist of goal-line stands, punt return/block formations, as well as one for preventing the "long bomb."

Fortunately, there is plenty of room for variation with all of the formations; on offense a receiver may be put into motion to charge up a play, and up to four players on defense may be directed either to blitz, cover the pass or to follow the set pattern for the formation chosen. These options provide for plenty of variation from play to play, even if the same formations are chosen.

Your language may tend toward the colorful when a fumble leaves your quarterback rolling in the dust or the occasional interception ruins your 80-yard drive down the field. Penalties such as "intentional grounding" and "encroachment" will also slow your strategy down!

It's easy to become engrossed in this game as your quarterback barks out signals, first downs are announced and also when the play-by-play announcer comes on-screen occasionally to comment on a play. Control of your players is a good mix of both the computer and the player. If you don't quite have the hang of throwing that long pass or handling the handoffs, you can let the computer control them both. If you see an opportunity that you feel is worth a risk, however, simply take control of your player at that point, and the ball is yours to either hand off, throw or run with. This applies to all plays possible, including field goals, punts and even punt returns.

While playing against the computer is plenty of challenge, most people enjoy the head-to-head or cooperative modes of play. The graphics and animation are not disappointing, from the player's

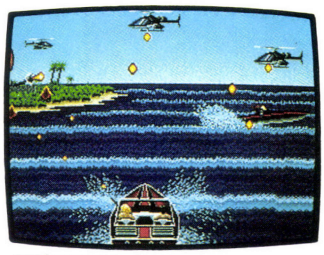
continued on page 46

17 COMPANIES HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT TO DISPLAY THIS SEAL.

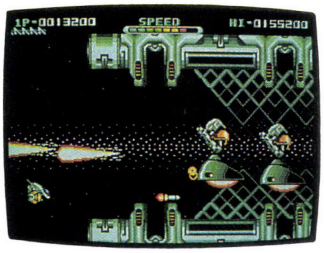




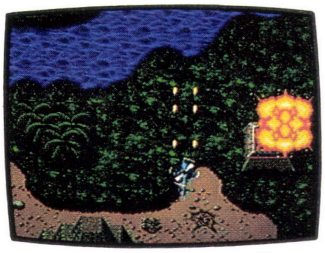
TRECO Atomic Robo-Kid™
Trash mutant life-forms and save the earth in this radical adventure!



NUVISION ENTERTAINMENT INC Bimini Run™
A unique, action-packed, high-seas adventure where strange sea creatures tax your skills.



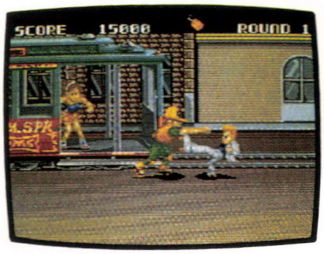
RENOVATION PRODUCTS Whip Rush™
A horizontal and vertical scrolling game where you operate a mighty jet fighter and challenge seven stages of shooting scenes.



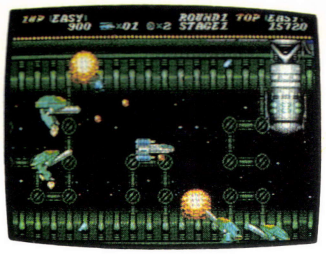
KYUGO TRADING CO., LTD. Cross Fire™
A shooting action game featuring helicopters in death-defying combat!



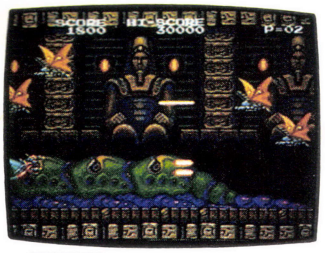
INTV CORPORATION Curse™
An intense shooter as you fly an attack craft through alien hazards to reach the ultimate goal—the quest of the Solar Grail!



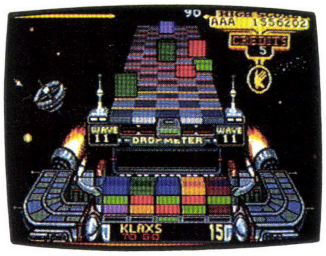
KANEKO DJ Boy™
Rollerskate to action and win the ultimate street fight challenge.



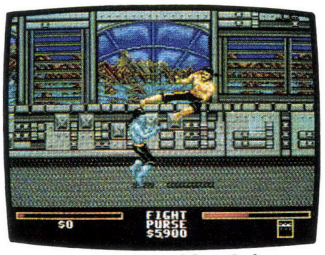
SEISMIC Hell Fire™
Shoot or die in this horizontal scrolling shooting game.



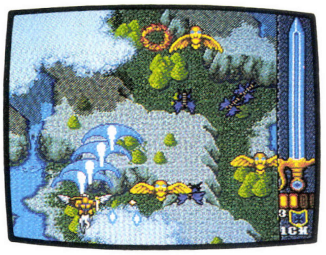
SAGES CREATION Insector X™
Destroy insect worlds full of danger in this intense shooting game based upon the arcade hit.



TENGEN Klax™
Move fast and think faster in this strategic video challenge. Catch and arrange color tiles coming down conveyer belt—this is a scream!



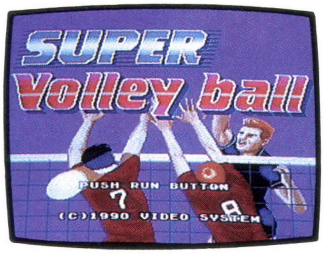
ACTIVISION Mondu's Fight Palace™
Role playing fun, hit music and great sound effects for 1 or 2 players—outrageous!



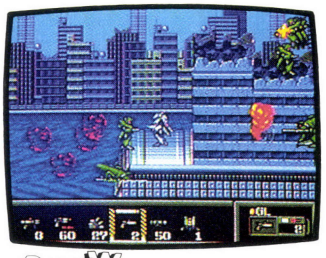
namco Phelios™
Apollo challenges enemies to rescue Artemis in this arcade classic with vivid graphics and animation.



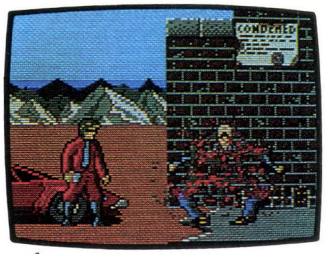
ELECTRONIC ARTS® Populous™
The first game of its kind. The player becomes a Divine Power looking over a new world and the birth of two warrior nations.



VIDEO SYSTEM Super Volleyball™
Total volleyball action that puts you in the game. Go for the spike—this is tournament play at its best!



DREAMWORKS Target Earth™
In this action space-fantasy game, Earth is under attack from an invading cyborg armada. Your mission is to protect the planet at all costs—Good Luck!



Technocop™
You're a cop, detective and road warrior of the future. Your mission is to rid society of radical gangs of punks and thugs. Arm yourself and aim straight!



Technosoft Thunderforce III™
Rush into a world of perpetual motion and experience the line scroll function for the first time ever.



Micronet CO., Ltd. Caesar™
Free Cleopatra from the clutches of her enemies in this real time simulation game.

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Look for these companies who have earned the right to display the Official Sega Genesis Seal of Quality.

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continued from page 43

representations on the field to the announcer and occasional "Hi mom!" shot of a player.

Mastering the various plays and strategies isn't an easy task and may lead to frustration for some, but it shouldn't be out of reach of most players. *TV Sports Football* should be an enjoyable addition to your sports library!

—Brent Walker

Cinemaware
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Westlake Village, CA 91362
(805) 495-6515



Based on the short-lived TV series, Ultra's *RollerGames* sets you out on skates to free the league commissioner from his V.I.P.E.R. kidnappers.

RollerGames

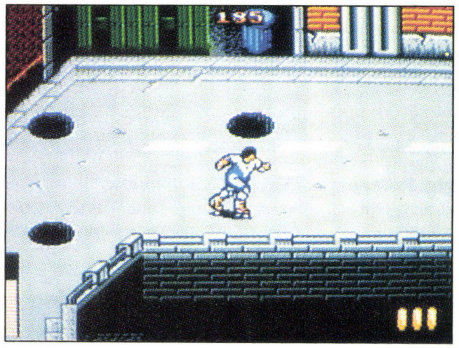
ULTRA

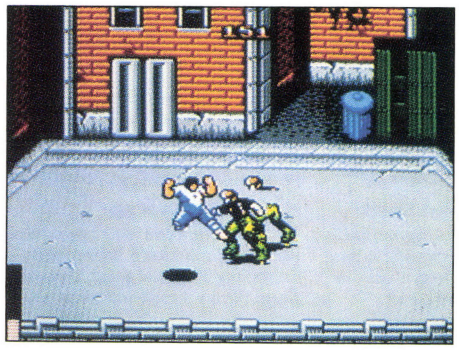
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($42.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Every time people get together to have a little fun, someone comes along and ruins it.

This time it's V.I.P.E.R. (Vicious International Punks and Eternal Renegades) that has crashed the ever-popular *RollerGames* and turned a fun competition into a blood bash. The games' commissioner, Emerson "Skeeter" Bankhead, has been captured by the roller fiends and is being held until V.I.P.E.R. gets the games' award money, which they plan to use to finance a terrorist operation.





In *RollerGames*, a sort of *Double Dragon* on skates, you play a member of the Thunderbirds, the Hot Flash or the Rockers as you attempt to rid the city of rolling renegades and, of course, rescue Emerson Bankhead.

At the start of each level, you choose which team you want to play. Each team has its own set of attributes and "patented punishment technique." Will you need Ice Box's slow yet methodical skating? Or is Rolling Thunder, with her lightning maneuvers, more suited to your plans? How about California Kid, with his powerful two-stage kick? Choose your character based on your video-game skills and the level you're about to play.

As you search out the V.I.P.E.R. meanies, you'll skate through six challenging stages: downtown, night highway, automobile processing plant, regional freeway, Jungle River and Viper's Pit. In each location, your skating skills will be taxed to their limit as you try to avoid various obstacles, including ramps, pits, oil drums, needles, crumbling roads and radioactive sewage. In addition, dropping platforms, rolling logs and flame throwers add to the excitement.

But you'll contend with more than just a few obstacles. You'll also battle the V.I.P.E.R. thugs, who attack from hidden alleys and from behind doors. As with most fighting games, each type of enemy attacks in a different way. Plan to lock wheels with Maniacs, Violators and Bad Attitudes, as well as the team leaders, Lucy Ferball, Guru Drew and Skull Scraper. Also helping V.I.P.E.R. with its nefarious plans are different types of groupies, such as moon doggies, birds of parasites, roller punks, moto-crushers, fish faces and others.

Don't plan to find and use a lot of fancy weapons. In *RollerGames* it's just you, your skates and your fists (and sometimes your feet and elbows) against the bad guys. Pure skating and punching skill are required to turn the RollerGames back into the sport it was meant to be.

In summary, *RollerGames*, with its interesting blend of game genres and competent graphics, will please most NES players. Although it won't wheel everyone over, it's sure to provide many hours of skating shenanigans.

—Clayton Walnum

Ultra Software Corp.
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510
(708) 215-5111

Splatterhouse

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Get out the barf bags! *Splatterhouse* is the grossest video game I've seen yet. It most definitely lives up to its name. Yes,

HELLFIRE

OFFICIAL SEGA GENESIS SEAL OF QUALITY

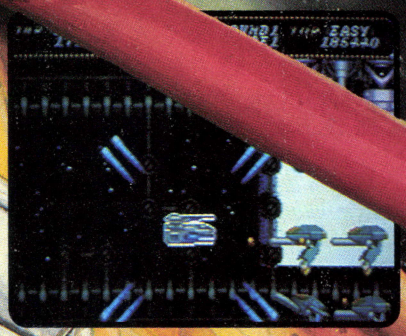
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At least you'll look good as you go down in flames!









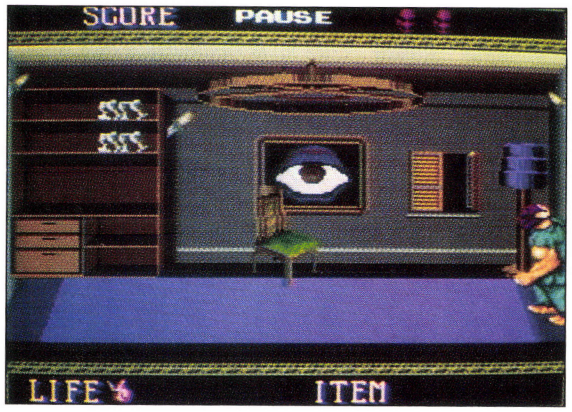
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you too can blast corpses into pieces, get hacked up by madmen with chain saws and watch ghouls puke up puddles of green slime. All you would-be Freddie Kruegers will love this baby. You can take that to the blood bank.

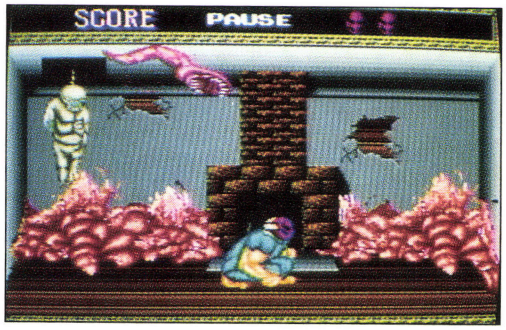
The scenario: Rick (that's you) and his girlfriend, Jennifer, both parapsychology majors, decide to check out an eerie place called West Mansion. Once known as "Splatterhouse," West Mansion was the home of Dr. West, the maddest of the mad scientists. During his stay at West Mansion, Dr. West created some of the goriest ghoulies to shamble across the face of the planet. As Rick and Jennifer discover the hard way, the house is still inhabited. The two ghost hunters are attacked, and after a fight, Rick awakens to find Jennifer missing.

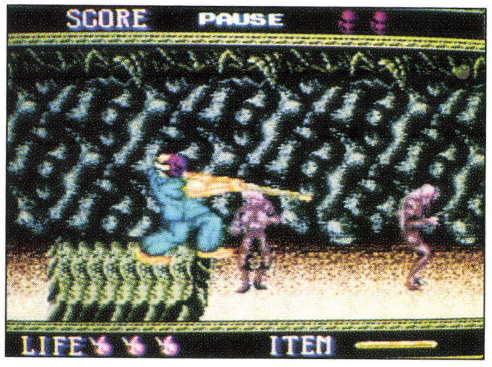
As you've probably guessed, your mission is to fight through West Mansion and rescue Jennifer. At first you'll have only your fists and feet for weapons. As you advance, you'll find special weapons such as two-by-fours, wrenches, meat cleavers (splatter, slice, slop, goop), shotguns, stones and spears. Use your weapons to reduce the enemies to gory chunks of oozing flesh.

You start the game with three "Ricks" (lives), with each Rick taking five hits to kill. Along the way you can earn extra lives and hearts. When you lose all your lives, the game is over. You may, however, continue up to five times from the last level you played.

As with most fighting games, you can employ your fists and feet in a number of ways, lashing out with punches, jump kicks and stooping kicks, among other moves. The slide kick, a particularly tricky maneuver, is the most effective of the hand-to-claw fighting techniques.

Splatterhouse comprises seven levels, each of which is made up of several areas. Hack and slash your way through the underground dungeon, the sewage canal, the forest, the forbidden room, the rendezvous, the womb and the finale. Some levels contain more than one route to the end. Holes in bridges, for example, will drop you into optional sewer or river scenes.





NEC's *Splatterhouse* is reminiscent of the *Halloween* and *Friday the 13th* movies, though this time you're wearing the mask as the good guy.

A great deal of ingenuity went into this game. One of my favorite "bosses" is a room that quakes and rattles, knocking deadly objects from the walls and ceiling, after which it comes alive like something out of the *Exorcist*. Inanimate objects fly around the room as if controlled by devils or ghosts. A chair hops toward you. Knives spin through the air. Even the picture hanging on the wall gets in its licks. Just when you think it's all over, the room rattles one last time, and the chandelier crashes down on your head. Look out!

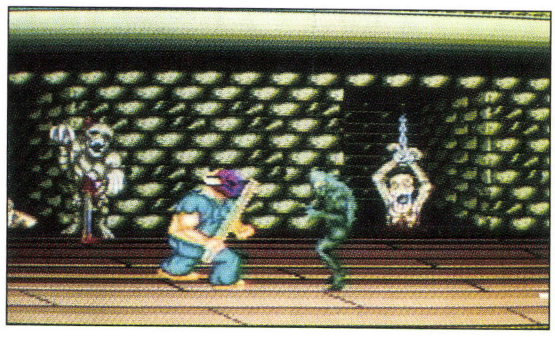
Other creatures that inhabit West Mansion include zombies, corpses, bats, demons, slimes, slugs and more. All in all, a wonderfully ghoulish gang of guys.

Although the soundtrack is not as catchy as in some other TurboGrafx-16 games, it's suitably spooky (in an odd sort of way) and matches the game well. The graphics and sound effects are better than average, creating just the right atmosphere for a video-game horror romp.

In general, *Splatterhouse* is an entertaining haunted-house saga aimed at Ghostbusters-in-training everywhere. I doubt, however, the weak of heart will care much for this blood feast. It's violent, gross, grotesque, depraved and completely lacking in class. Guess that's why I like it.

—C. W.

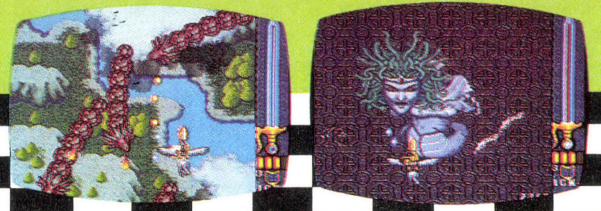
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SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE

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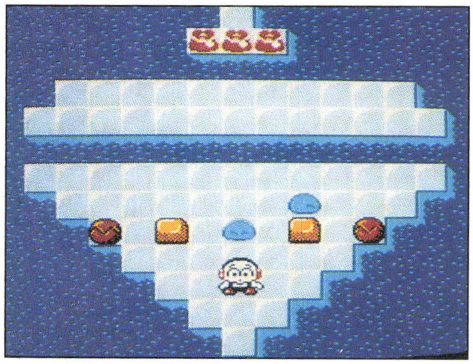
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Kickle Cubicle

IREM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

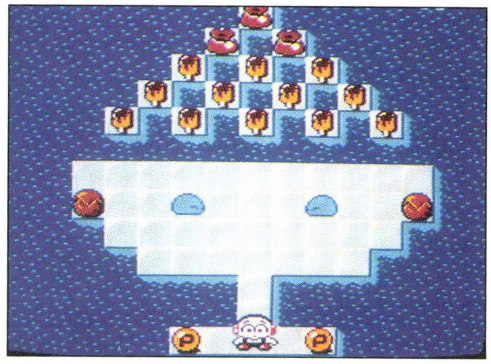
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

I'm a sucker for games like *Kickle Cubicle*. There's plenty of them out there: cute, simple-minded contests of Japanese design, with bright colors, bouncy music and a short, round main character. These games have a family tree that can be traced back to *Pac-Man* and beyond. In fact, the whole *Mario Bros.* saga is like a "cute" game that got out of control.

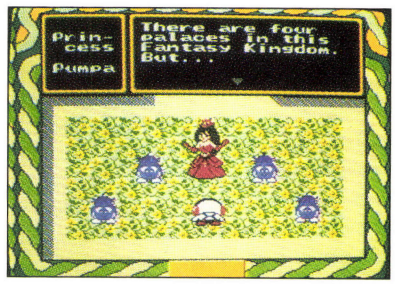
Kickle Cubicle is recommended for five- to 12-year-olds—but, hey, we're all kids at heart! Kickle is an intrepid little squirt who innocently stumbles into an elaborate scheme of evil involving stolen palaces and four kidnapped princesses. Of course, that's the oldest plot device in the history of video gaming, and it doesn't give you much motivation. But this is a game of strategic action, not blind pursuit—and when you're approached by talking vegetables, it's hard to ignore their impassioned pleas for assistance!

The main action borrows elements from a number of similar contests, from the classic *Pengo* arcade game to current maze/puzzle titles like *The Adventures of Lolo*. One screen at a time, our hero must find a way to pick up the scattered "dream bags" while avoiding the restless inhabitants of the Fantasy Kingdom. Though contact with any of these odd-shaped creatures costs you one of three lives, most of them don't pursue you directly.

Kickle's equipped with...er, "freezing breath," as well as an unlimited supply of ice pillars that can be placed almost anywhere. The object is to use the obstacles to direct the movement of your opponents, who can be frozen into ice cubes. If there are any treasures on the screen that are unreachable, you can get to them by building bridges with these cubes.

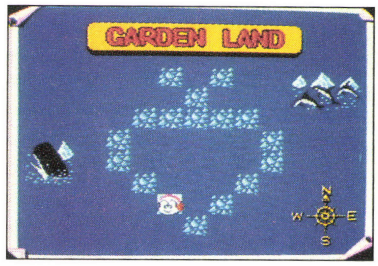


This alone is not enough to keep your interest for more than a few minutes, so the programmers have added a bit of a twist to each new screen. There are sharp-edged stars that roll around the walls, springs that send the cubes flying back in your face, rotating gun turrets, cubes that change back into living creatures when you try to push them—and that's just the first level! There are four levels in all, each consisting of 16 or 17 "puzzles."



The music is okay, but the same theme plays during each screen and wears thin before the game's halfway point. Losing games can be continued indefinitely until the NES is turned off, at which point a password can be used to record your progress.

Visually, the game is a delight. There's not a lot of graphic detail, but the cartoonish animation is really vivid, thanks to an overabundance of rich color. Neat intermissions lead to the end boss of each level, whose defeat allows Kickle to meet one of the princesses.



***Kickle Cubicle*, the main character and title of this Irem game for the NES, leads you into some intense puzzling action that involves stolen palaces and talking vegetables.**

Sadly, these tall, buxom beauties look untouchable to our hero Kickle, who is short, bald and pale beneath his fuzzy, red earmuffs. But they're always grateful and beg him to continue on his intrepid quest.

There's no middle ground in forming an opinion on *Kickle Cubicle*; either you love it or you hate it. Kids are sure to enjoy it, and so are people like me who know how to appreciate this type of light-hearted foolishness.

Others may find this game too sugar-coated and won't touch it with a ten-foot pole. Heck, even the title is cute. It's the kind of name that kids like to say out loud, just because it sounds funny. I can hear it now: "Daddy, I wanna play *Kickle Cubicle*!"

—Chris Bieniek

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Phelios

NAMCO

For the Sega Genesis ($63.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

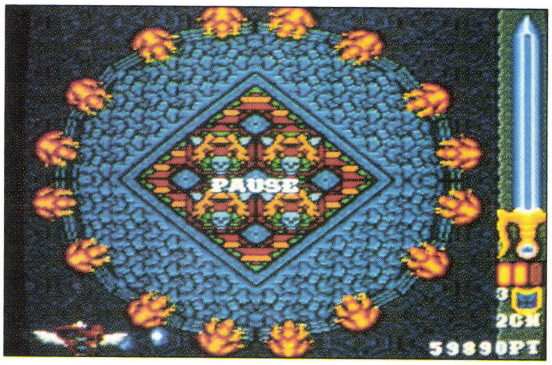
A few years ago, a game called *Legendary Wings* was released for the NES. Too easy for hard-core arcade addicts, it was nonetheless a beautiful variation of slide-and-shoot, with a mythological theme. *Phelios* is based on the same concept: a shoot-'em-up cloaked in characters and scenery out of Greek mythology. With the addition of Genesis' arcade-quality graphics and sound, you have an exceptionally striking rendition of the theme.

You are Apollo, riding your winged horse Pegasus. You must travel through seven different areas in order to reach the beautiful Artemis. Artemis has been imprisoned by evil Typhon and turned to stone. However, at the end of each level lurks one of Typhon's stronger guards; defeating a guard allows Artemis to return to life briefly. Every time she revives, she offers advice or encouragement for the subsequent level.

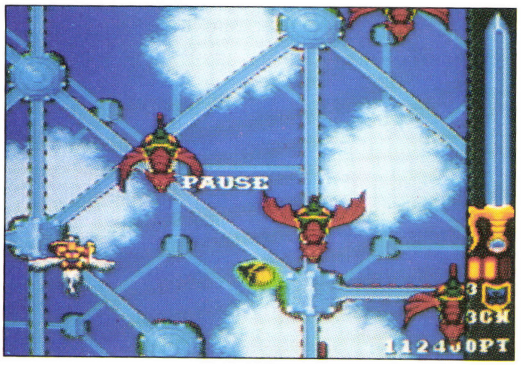
Typhon is found at the end of the seventh level, and he can only be defeated with Phelios, the Sword of Light. Phelios is only available during the last level, so you'll be using lesser weaponry until then. Weapons and various power-ups (such as beams, hyperspeed, homing bombs, additional lives and small sprites that hover about and fire alongside you) are available by shooting golden owls. Once shot, the owls transform into letters; you swoop over and pick up the letters.

A gauge at the side of the screen shows you how much power your current weapon has, and that power can be used to its best advantage by holding the fire button down and letting it charge. Some weapons are only useful for a limited amount of time and degrade after prolonged use.

Your view of the action is from overhead at all times. The game utilizes several variations of scrolling to create some really startling effects. At one point, clouds scroll by in multiple levels, and the direction of the scroll shifts, seemingly at random, sideways and diagonally. The result is an amazing feeling of vertigo and weightlessness. Other multilevel scrolling creates the illusion of deep trenches, tall towers and other immense structures, floating and descending beneath you. As you weave through and around these structures, you fend off the usual flying adversaries.



Each level ends in a dungeon. The dungeons are filled with nasties, and at the end of each dungeon lurks a boss guard. These guards are characters from mythology: Medusa, with her head of writhing snakes; Geryon, the three witches who share a single eye, and more. One advantage the game gives you in battling the guards is in a series of single-screen synopses, available when the game starts, telling where the bosses' weaknesses lie. There are some clever puzzles along the way, but to deal with these hazards, you'll have to figure out what the best approach and best weapons are.





***Phelios*, Namco's first entry for the Genesis library, is a visually interesting scrolling game reminiscent of *Legendary Wings* on the NES.**

The music is crystal clear and in full stereo, with some majestic passages. The sound effects are excellent, with a feeling of solidity and realism that make it feel like fireworks are actually going off in the room.

There's a lot of voice synthesis, announcing which power-up items you've obtained and providing the voice of Artemis. The voice synthesis was less than impressive, high-pitched and full of static, but this is likely to change when the game goes through the final translation from Japanese to English.

Overall, *Phelios* is a very refreshing change from the usual slide-and-shoot and takes good advantage of the Genesis' power. Far more interesting visually than *Thunderforce II* or *Truxton*, *Phelios* is deserving of a place in a Genesis fan's library of games.

—Joshua Mandel

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CIRCLE #123 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Mechanized Attack

SNK

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

Grab your machine gun and prepare yourself for action. *Mechanized Attack* pits the player against several screens of various bad guys, all determined to blast you into Swiss cheese. A variety of flying craft, tanks, planes, ships, soldiers and cyborgs are just a few of the enemies that defend a series of landscapes consisting of oceans, beaches, moonlit forests and caverns in this new "blast 'em until your TV bleeds" game.

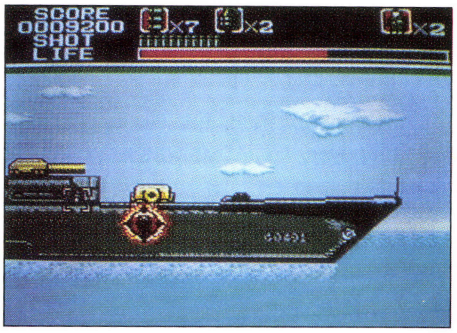
SNK brings another arcade game to the home with *Mechanized Attack*. Those familiar with *Operation Wolf* should recognize many of the same characteristics in this game. The object of this game is basically to blast away at everything that looks even remotely hostile while trying to stay alive long enough to advance to the next stage.

Each game starts out with three lives, with one continue allowed when those first three are expended. Your arsenal consists of four magazines with 40 bullets each and five grenades. Throughout the game, this supply may be increased by shooting at small grenade or magazine symbols that will either add a grenade or add a magazine to your supply, respectively. Other items available include health potions to partially restore your health or first-aid kits that will provide a complete restoration. There are also shot power-ups that will give more shot power for the attack, as well as body armor that will decrease the damage taken by your player when hit. Small player symbols also appear occasionally and award an extra man.

As an area is completed, a choice of one or two rounds is offered as the next challenge. Players choose one or the other by shooting in the appropriate area. Most of the action takes place while scrolling horizontally through the landscapes, though occasionally the screen stops for either a mass attack by the enemy or a confrontation with the typical end-of-the-round boss.

Either a light gun or a joystick may be used, and while it may seem difficult to use a joystick on a game of this sort, it actually works fairly well. An on-screen sight is guided around when using the joystick, and automatic fire is provided by simply holding down the button. Autofire joysticks or slow-motion features aren't helpful and can actually make things more difficult.







SNK has been successful at duplicating its arcade games on the NES, and *Mechanized Attack* is no different.

The enemies are various in nature: planes, tanks, helicopters, soldiers, drones and missile-spitting dogs(?) all combine in many styles of attack to thwart your mission. Some are dispatched with a single shot, while others require several shots or a blizzard of grenades. The end-of-the-round bosses can be difficult without at least a few grenades, but the strategy for all of them is the same.

The graphics are mainly scrolling backgrounds of different landscapes; and while they're nothing to shout about, they are done fairly well. The enemies are rendered faithfully to the arcade version and are animated acceptably. The background music is somewhat bland and is the same for each round, but other sound effects are adequate.

Game play is straightforward, but not particularly challenging after a few games. I was able to reach the end after only three attempts! There are a few different ways to finish the game, depending upon the order in which the areas are cleared, but even then it often takes under 15 minutes to complete the game.

Mechanized Attack appears to be much like its arcade brother, but unfortunately, doesn't have enough body to give it any kind of longevity. Players who flipped over the arcade version or are desperate for something to use a light gun on may want to acquire this one. Otherwise, it's probably best to rent it for an afternoon of quick destruction.

—B. W.

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Thunder Force III

TECHNOSOFT

For the Sega Genesis ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10



Thunder Force II was—and still is—one of the best of the early Genesis titles, so I was intrigued when I heard that Technosoft was considering another sequel. I had my doubts as to whether they would actually be able to improve on the original, but now that I have seen "Number 3" in progress, suspicion is no longer necessary.

The cart I received was a work-in-progress, complete with an intermission screen that proclaimed in big, bold letters, "Coming Soon." Only three worlds were finished, and each one could be entered at the options screen. If this trio is any indication of what's to come, we're in for a treat.

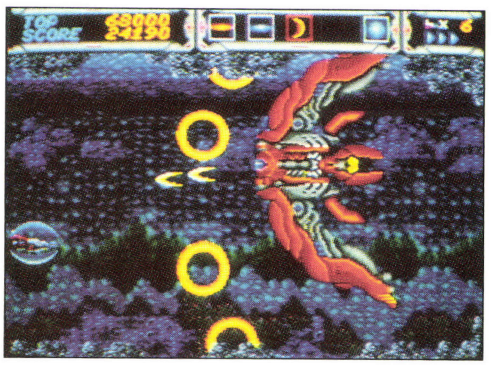
World 1 is the planet Hydra, which features two levels of a horizontally scrolling forest-world setting. Here, even the huge, sunflowerlike creatures are deadly and intelligent enemies. World 2, named Gorgon, features mesmerizing backgrounds that are right out of *Dante's Inferno*. World 3, called Seiren, presents five levels of horizontal parallax scrolling in an underwater environment, where large robotic octopi and sea snakes are predominant.

Parallax scrolling is used quite elegantly to simulate the third dimension (into the screen), in an otherwise two-dimensional, horizontally scrolling shooter. Having more than one moving background aids the illusion of depth.

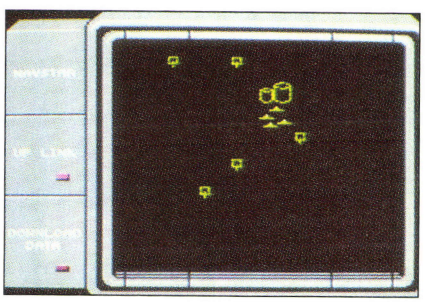
Another graphic technique that is put to good advantage is the use of simulated three-dimensional objects that appear to rotate as they move. The dual-drone protectors, a weapon system obtained early on in the contest that hovers around your spacecraft, are excellent examples.

The robotic snakes deserve special mention. They fill nearly a third of the playscreen and are actually many individual sprites connected together like vertebrae. The exceptional point here is the fact that they move fluidly, without even a hint of screen flicker.





Technosoft's *Thunder Force III* follows on the heels of its Genesis predecessor with lots of arcade action, wonderful graphics and stunning sound effects.



Technosoft has used a technique that would have really helped out other games that use large boss characters, particularly *Altered Beast*, which had a lot of problems with flicker.

Digitized voices announce the addition of new weapon systems to your arsenal. These voices run in the background and do not slow down or interrupt the game. Now, if they would translate what seem to be Japanese words into English, all would be right with the world.

As in the original, game mechanics are very simple. Button "A" provides a burst of speed, Button "B" is continuous rapid fire and Button "C" allows the player to select a different weapon system from his/her inventory.

These weapon systems are wonderful and varied, and both forward and reverse fire are supported. The sound effects are very realistic and are accompanied by excellent explosion sprites.

Something seems to be missing, though. In *Thunder Force II*, a player was treated to overhead perspective sequences every other level. These are either totally absent in *Thunder Force III* or perhaps still in the programming stages. I hope Technosoft will continue this tradition. It provided variety, and that is, after all, the spice of life.

The one feature that would have capped an excellent effort in both *TF2* and *TF3* is the addition of a two-player option. All things considered, Technosoft already has a bona fide hit on their hands. *Thunder Force III* truly defines the expression "bringing the arcade home"!

—Frank Eva

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Battletank

ABSOLUTE ENTERTAINMENT

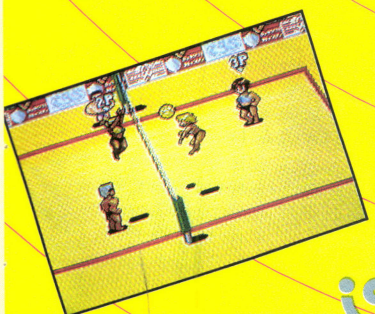
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($34.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Battletank is a well-done, first-person tank simulator. It's easy to control, sports

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CIRCLE #125 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

good graphics and is a lot of fun to play. Rest assured, however, that you will spend many long, enjoyable hours attempting to complete your missions!

The ostensible mission in *Battletank* is to rescue your commanding officer, but the real objective is to complete all ten missions that comprise the game. You are in command of a NATO M1 tank, a rather awesome piece of hardware that sports a 50-caliber machine gun, 150mm cannon, smoke screen and wire-guided missiles. It also has heavy enough armor to withstand six hits and has a top speed of about 60 mph. This is some tank!



The view is from the cockpit, through the front windshield. You can see the treads of your tank, the 150mm cannon and scenery (hills, bushes, etc.) through the windshield. The control panel shows the current weapon you are using, your speed, damage indicators, compass, fuel gauge and enemy ID panel (what type and range and the 150mm-cannon angle).



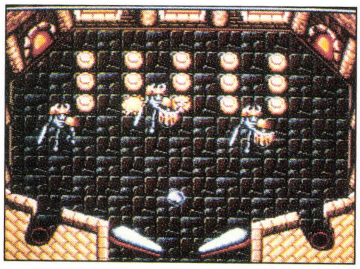
There is also a small, short-range radar scope below the windshield. Your tank is shown in the center, and enemies are shown as white blips on the screen, so you can line up on them before they are in sight.



The map screen (which you get to by pressing the **START** button) shows the terrain and enemy equipment. Minefields, helicopters and tanks all combine to make your mission hazardous. By careful planning, however, you can attack the enemy in the order that suits *you* by setting an appropriate route on the map screen. While on this display, you can cover territory quickly, but it's best to switch back to "real" view when confronted by an enemy vehicle!

Absolute Entertainment gives NES owners a meatier version of *Battlezone* with its *Battletank* game.

As you can imagine, each mission gets more difficult. There are more enemy vehicles to contend with, and they get more skillful in their attacks on you. You get more ammunition with each mission, especially the powerful guided missiles. Each mission has a goal, such as destroying a power station or fuel tank, but the mission isn't over until all enemy forces have been obliterated.



Even then, you must deal with an enemy stronghold in Mission 3 and above. These are tough, but each has a weakness that can be exploited, once you find it. In the upper missions, there is one or more NATO bases at which you can refuel, repair and rearm. Each base can only be used once, however.

Battletank is more than just an arcade game. It requires planning and strategy to advance very far, as well as a recognition of enemy tactics. For example, enemy tanks tend to outrun you and get out of range of your big gun, but the 50-caliber machine guns will slow them down enough to get into range for the kill. Helicopters present another challenge—they are faster and more maneuverable than you. But your tank can turn in place and back up, something you can use to good advantage.

The graphics are superb: the terrain scrolls by smoothly, and enemy vehicles are detailed and well-animated. You can often spot the oncoming enemy visually before they show up on radar by the arc of their shells—enemy tanks start firing way too early, giving themselves away with the sound of their guns.

The control scheme requires using the **START**, **SELECT** and both buttons, but it is easy to adapt to it. In fact, about the only thing I didn't care for was that there is no password feature—you must play from the first mission each time, and you get only a single continue. Other than that minor flaw, *Battletank* is great fun and extremely well-executed.

—David Plotkin

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Devil's Crush

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

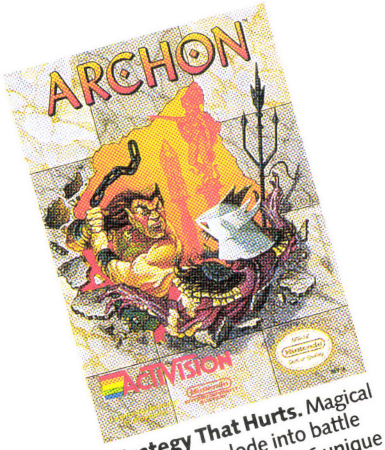
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

A combination of realistic pinball action and bizarre insectoid graphics made *Alien*

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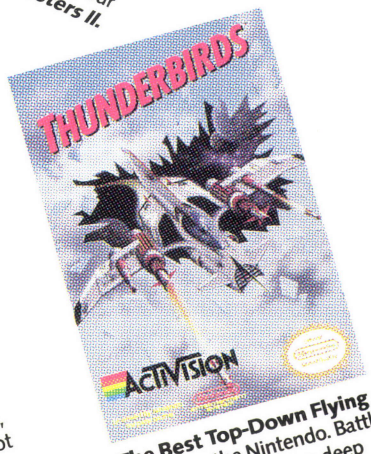
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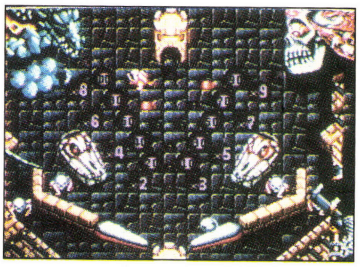
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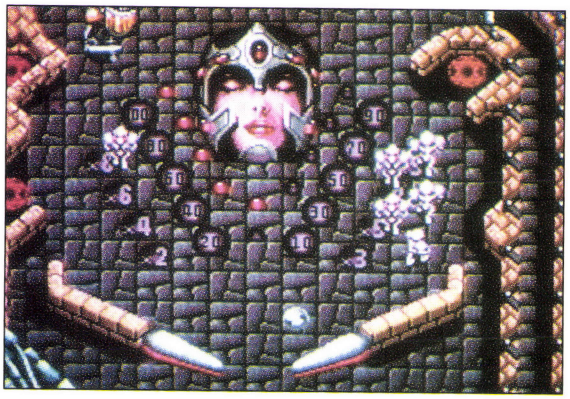
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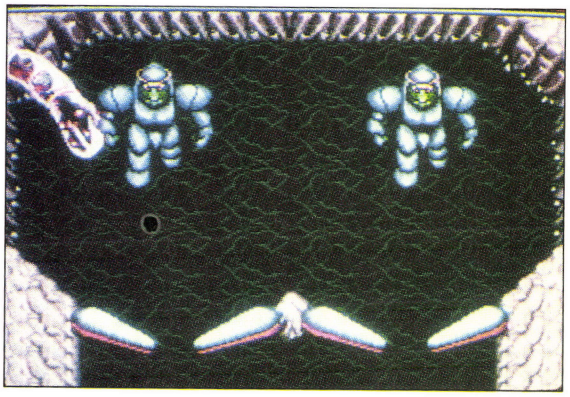
CIRCLE #126 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Crush the last word in video pinball. Ever since its release, there have been rumors of a follow-up, and finally, that sequel's been hatched: *Devil's Crush* for the TG-16.

Everything that made *Alien Crush* a great pinball simulation is present in even greater supply in *Devil's Crush*: superior graphics, multiple screens, authentic pinball action and loads of targets and bonus areas—all tied together in a sinister theme of the undead and the unholy.







A sequel to *Alien Crush*, *Devil's Crush* for the TurboGrafx-16 is another bizarre pinball game filled with little knights, skeletons and a woman's head that metamorphoses into a lizard.

The main playfield ("table" in pinball parlance) resembles the interior of an immense stone cathedral, three screens tall. There are three sets of flippers, one at the bottom of each of the three sections. The view scrolls vertically, but as opposed to the disorienting "blinking" of *AC*, this is a smooth scroll. Moreover, the scrolling is done in different lengths, so the effect is that the screen keeps up with the ball just enough to keep it from vanishing off the top or bottom of the screen. This is a major improvement over *AC* but causes a problem of its own: You sometimes end up with flippers in the center of the screen. If you're good at capturing the ball, you often find yourself with only half the table above the flippers visible for aiming purposes.

The cathedral is crawling with evil creatures: skeletons (resembling football players), crawling and flying monstrosities, bursting eggs and skulls, a gate behind which lurks a succession of demon warriors, a huge goddess's head that transmogrifies slowly into a reptilian nightmare and robed monks marching around a pentagram. If ever there was a game designed to offend those who condemn satanic references in games, this will do it.

The profusion of shambling horrors creates the other main problem with this game: There are so many creatures walking across the table, your ball continuously gets knocked around at random. This makes *DC* a much tougher game than *AC*, with its comparatively uncluttered table. You won't be racking up 15,000,000 points your first time around with this game; controlling the ball is far more difficult.

The sound here has been improved: Although you no longer have a choice of theme music, you'll hear chanting in the background, grunts and groans, and when you lose your ball, a skull (whose eyes follow your ball all around the table) chuckles at you!

Devil's Crush offers a much greater variety of bonus screens (though the screens are harder to get to) than its predecessor. Several even include two sets of flippers, mounted side-by-side. Some of the creatures you'll battle in the bonus screens are gigantic, armored fighters who constantly throw spears in the way of your ball, priests surrounded by their supplicants and a trio of grinning skulls spitting misshapen, gray humanoids. The bonus screens in *AC* are a cakewalk compared to these!

Another improvement is the inclusion of a two-player alternating mode. No TurboTap or second joystick is required; you simply pass the first TurboPad back and forth between the two players. You can also save a game in progress if you have the TurboBooster+ or the CD-ROM attachment. Like *Alien Crush*, you can shake the table slightly with the II button, and you can also choose between fast and slow ball speed. In this game, even the slow setting is a decent challenge.

Devil's Crush is a must-have for those who enjoyed *Alien Crush* (or for those who thought the original was too simple). It's loaded with more clever animation, impressive graphics and fast, frenetic action than the original.

—J. W.

NEC Technologies, Inc.
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(708) 860-9500

Thunderbirds

ACTIVISION

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.95)



SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Back in the '60s, when Nintendo was still known as a manufacturer of playing cards, kids would gather around the



Before the LAPC-1 Music Card

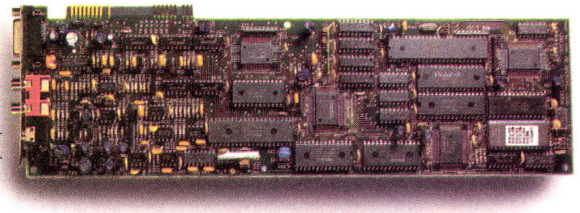


After the LAPC-1 Music Card

Actual results may vary.

If we were you, we sure as heck wouldn't run out and buy an LAPC-1 without knowing something about what it does. So if you give us a moment, we'll tell you.

The LAPC-1 is a music synthesizer card which, when you stick it into your computer, takes the pitifully anemic sounds computer games offer up and turns them into something quite extraordinary. Or, to put it another way, instead of going "plink" the way it does now, your computer will go "KA-PHLOOM" the way it's supposed to. And as luck and our ingenious engineers would have it, it'll do all this with the games from Sierra®, Activision®, MediaGenic®, Lucasfilm®, Access®, MicroProse®, and nearly everybody else.



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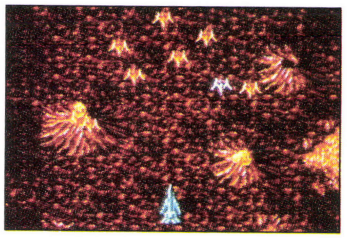
television set once a week to catch the latest adventures of Jeff Tracy and his five sons, pilots of the coolest fleet of high-powered vehicles around: the Thunderbirds!

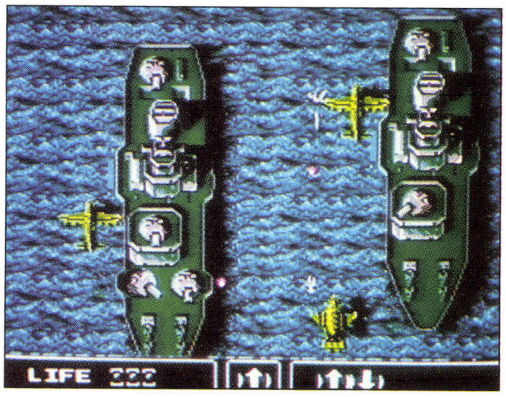
It's safe to assume that most NES-owners are not familiar with the Tracy family's exploits, which haven't been seen much outside of the TV show's original run and a couple of feature films. In this sense, Activision's *Thunderbirds* is a refreshingly risky title. In a world of "hot" licensed properties, where video games are developed at the same time as the movies they're based on, who would dare to merchandise a TV show that was canceled nearly 25 years ago?

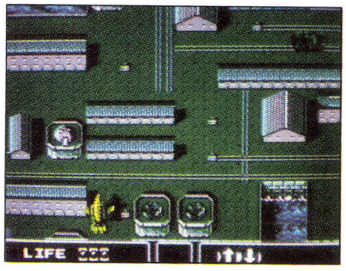
The game (and the show) features the International Rescue team, five brothers who are given dangerous missions and use the Thunderbirds to execute them. These five vehicles range from a sleek rocket (Thunderbird 1) to a sophisticated satellite space station (Thunderbird 5), not including a couple of smaller vehicles that are used for special assignments. Jeff Tracy, the father, sits back at headquarters and coordinates their battle against the Hood, a glowering, bald-headed villain who has threatened to bombard the Earth with meteors unless the Thunderbirds are turned over to him.

After a good introductory sequence and a briefing from his father, Alan Tracy takes Thunderbird 1 into a vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up scenario, where deadly enemies sometimes turn into special weapons and power-up items when shot. The game alternates between these action scenes and short intermissions where the pilots report news of the Hood's diabolical scheme.

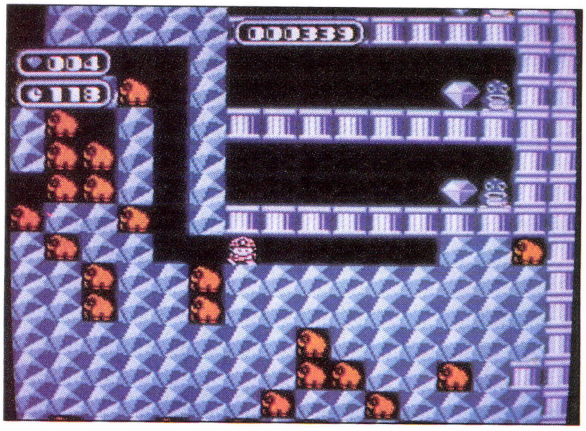
Each Thunderbird has a different type of offensive weapon, as well as the ability to pick up a pair of auto-fire "satellite" guns that hover around the ship in different configurations. After the evil threat has been thwarted and the Earth is considered safe, the rarely seen Thunderbird 3 is sent into space for the final battle against the Hood's ultimate energy source.







Activision has done a great job of resurrecting the '60s puppet space adventure for the NES with *Thunderbirds*.



The "actors" in the TV show were skillfully manipulated puppets with electronic sensors that caused their mouths to open and close in sync with prerecorded dialogue. It's amusing to see that same type of lip movement on the characters in the video game, as their hands bob up and down just like the puppets' did. The on-screen ships are small, but they are detailed enough to be recognizable by *T-Birds* fans. The show's theme music is also intact, a heroic fanfare that reappears several times in the course of the action. The only glaring inaccuracy concerns Brains, friend of the Tracys and the mechanical genius behind the Thunderbird fleet, who is inexplicably identified as "Doctor Brain" when he shows up to make repairs.

Thunderbirds is a fine game for shoot-'em-up fans. There are a few rough spots: Some attackers are hard to see because they blend in with the detailed backgrounds, and the game's sudden ending caught me by surprise. But the overall theme is exciting enough to captivate most players, even if you've never heard of International Rescue. It's not an easy game to master, but there's a simple password system that allows you to work on the hard parts without starting from scratch each time time you play.

The original series proudly boasted that it was "filmed in Supermarionation," a nonsensical term that was meant to describe the process of bringing puppets or "marionettes" to life. With the release of *Thunderbirds* for the NES, Activision has introduced "Supermarionation" to the "Super Mario Nation!"

—C. B.

Activision
2885 Bohannon Drive
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(800) 227-6900

Boulder Dash

JVC

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($36.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

Once upon a time, a boy named Rockford was given a map by his ill father



The Ghostbusters are Back! And Activision brings you the slimiest scenes from the blockbuster movie. Shift into high gear in your Ectomobile. Exterminate the paranormal pests at the courthouse. Pound the pavement with the Statue of Liberty. And slime Vigo at the Museum of Art before he rings in a nasty New Year!

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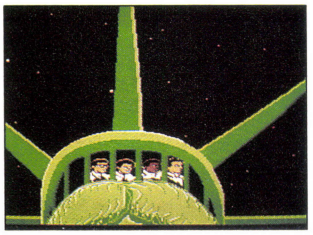
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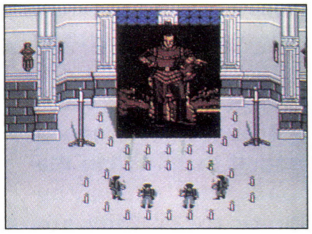
Ecto-1A's fully loaded. Super Zapper, Ghost Shield, Slime Blower, and more.



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Torch some ghouls with Lady Liberty.



Hose down Vigo with a mood slime shower.

ACTIVISION

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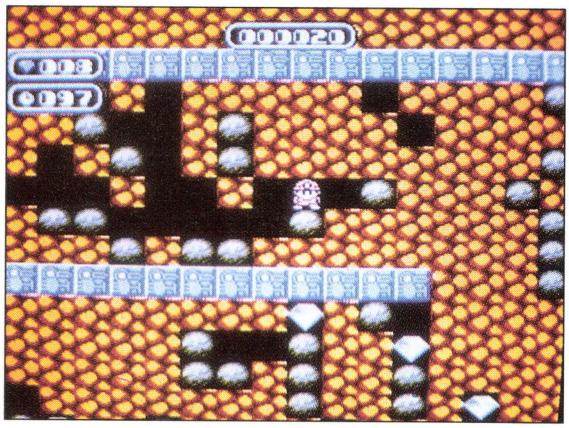
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See your local retailer or call 1-800-227-6900 to order.

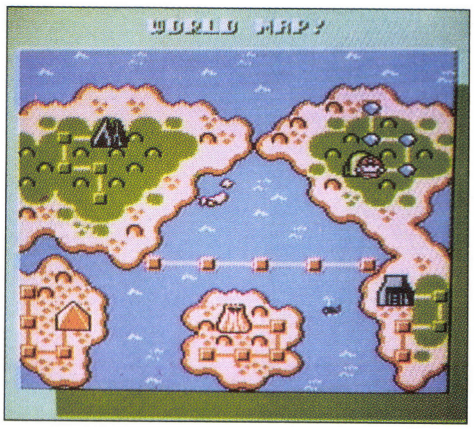
CIRCLE #128 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Stoneford. An old adventurer himself, Stoneford tells his son of the underground land of Boulder World. Instructing him to find the Secret Jewels of the Six Worlds, he dies.

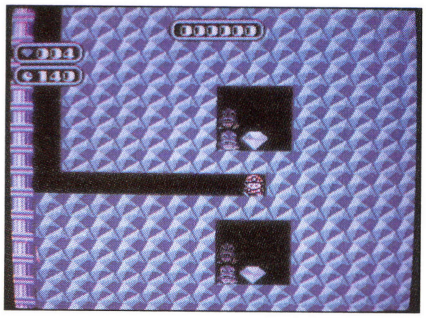
Thus the stage is set for Rockford to explore the six worlds of *Boulder Dash*. This NES version is not the first however. *Boulder Dash* was the brainchild of Chris Gray and saw much success in the computer world. It was even translated to an arcade version (see the May '90 issue of VG&CE for an interview with Chris Gray).



Rockford's task is to explore four different towns in each of the six worlds and collect the required number of diamonds in each town in order to advance to the next world. After the requirement is met for a town, a secret door appears that enables Rockford to advance to the next town. As each world is completed, a password is given so that play may be started at that world any time.



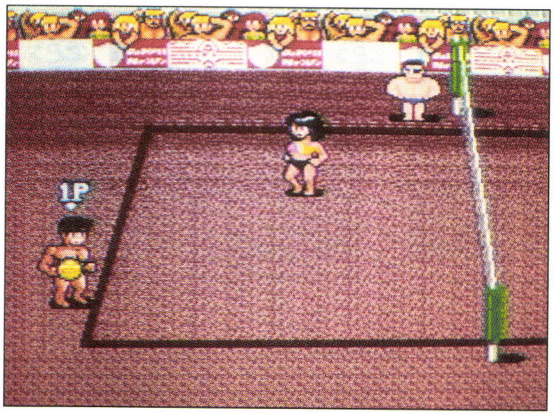
An on-screen map shows Rockford's progress through each town and world as play advances. One or two players may play, alternating play as one or the other dies. Each game begins with four lives, with extras awarded every 2,000 points. When these are expended, unlimited continues are available to allow continuation in the current world, although each of the four towns must be completed once again.



Boulder Dash's Rockford started on computer, moved to the arcade and has now made his way to the NES.

Clearing each town entails much more than simply running around picking up diamonds, however. A definite strategy exists for each town, both in acquiring the required number of diamonds and avoiding the various enemies that creep about the towns.

Nine different enemies oppose Rockford but may be defeated by either dropping rocks upon them or by trapping them and allowing the amoeba to engulf them. When the amoebas are trapped by walls or rocks, they are turned into diamonds, sometimes providing the last few diamonds needed to advance to the next town. Certain walls also can provide a wealth of diamonds when activated by dropping rocks through them.



Boulder Dash is much more a strategy game than an action game; thought and patience are the key to success. The strategy required to master this game can be difficult until a town is figured out and often remains difficult even if the correct procedure is known.

Graphically, the rocks, mud and walls can only be represented so many ways, so stunning backgrounds shouldn't be expected. Before game play begins, players may choose the color of their player, but this doesn't serve to boost the graphic appeal much. The sounds and music aren't extraordinary, but adequate for a game of this type. Strategy and planning are the key, therefore, the game play itself is the most important aspect, and *Boulder Dash* provides a hefty dose of challenge. This gives the game a limited audience, because the action aspects are somewhat restricted, but good reflexes are nevertheless required in some areas.

All in all, *Boulder Dash* provides the same kind of challenge as its computer and arcade counterparts and is a good strategy offering for the NES, with just enough action to keep you on your toes. Younger players may find this game a bit intimidating due to the fine line between determination and frustration contained in this one.

—B. W.

JVC Musical Industries
6363 Sunset Blvd., Suite 500
Hollywood, CA 90028
(213) 466-5927

Sonic Spike

IGS

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($45.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

Dive, dig, setup and spike! IGS brings volleyball to the TurboGrafx-16 with *Sonic Spike*. Volleyball is becoming more popular as a beach sport, and with a home version, you can leave the heat and sand at the beach and still enjoy a quick game.

This version of volleyball is based upon

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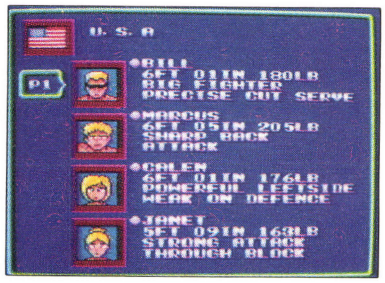
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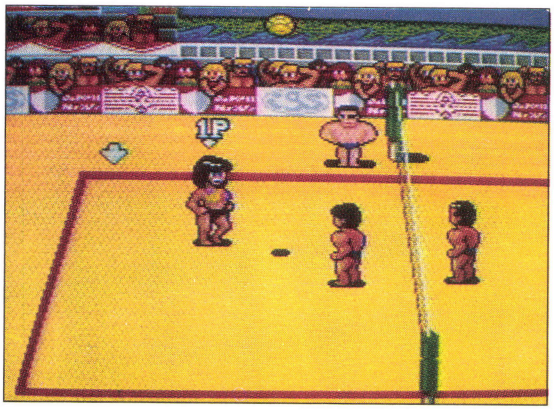
the popular beach version, where four players compete in teams of two each. You can choose from one to four players, or just sit back and let the computer have all the fun. There are a total of 24 players from six different nations, each with different playing strengths and weaknesses.

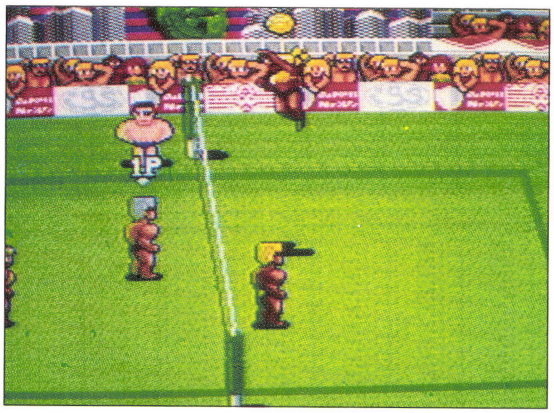


Each player has five different attributes that also contribute to that player's ability. Power, stamina, technique, jumping and running are each given a numerical value and may be modified if you choose to add that player to your team.

Volleyball is becoming a popular sport in America, and IGS has created *Sonic Spike* for the TurboGrafx-16 in an effort to bring the sport to video-game players.

Two different game options are available: single-match play and tournament play. With the first, simply pick two players for your team and two for the computer's team. The game can then be slightly modified—either one- or three-set matches may be chosen, with a match ending after 10, 12, 15 or 20 points and a few other minor changes added to provide some variety. There are then three courts to choose from: grass, sand and clay. Each surface has a difference with regard to the speed of play. Once you have chosen a playing surface, you are ready to go! After your match is over, you have an option of either replaying or starting over with different players.





In the tournament mode, you are only given a choice of four players to choose from, after which you are pitted against two other computer players from each of the six different countries trying for the championship. A playing surface isn't chosen in this mode. You must play a set on each of the three surfaces, after which you will be given a password, then advanced to the next country. Each set is played until one of the teams reaches 15 points, with the players switching court sides after eight points.

To start the action, you may choose either to give the basic bop-it-over-the-net serve or a jump-ten-feet-in-the-air-and-smash-it-over-the-net offering. The action is fast-paced, with commonplace diving saves and high-flying spikes, so don't expect any long periods of lethargic lobbing. These guys and gals came to play volleyball!

Unfortunately, the action may be just a little bit too fast-paced for anyone gifted with less than inhuman reflexes. Game play is made difficult by an inability to really see enough of the court to be able to prepare for a defensive posture before the ball has gone skidding across the ground. Even when playing against human opponents, a spiked ball lives up to the title of the game; it moves at what seems to be the speed of light!

Graphically, there just isn't much to look at. Granted, a game of this sort isn't dependent upon superb graphics, but the backgrounds are really a bit sparse, with the only variety coming in color changes of the court surface, or when the background behind the crowd changes to a different setting for each country—not that you really ever see it anyway, other than when the ball is arcing through the upper atmosphere!

Music consists of a little tune that plays in the background, but it doesn't change, and other than the little *thump* sounds, there isn't much else to speak of. A "mystery competitor" is promised if you manage to make it through the 18 games in the tournament mode, but that hardly seems enough enticement to endure through this one.

—B. W.

IGS
80 South Lake Ave., Suite 526
Pasadena, CA 91101
(818) 440-0626

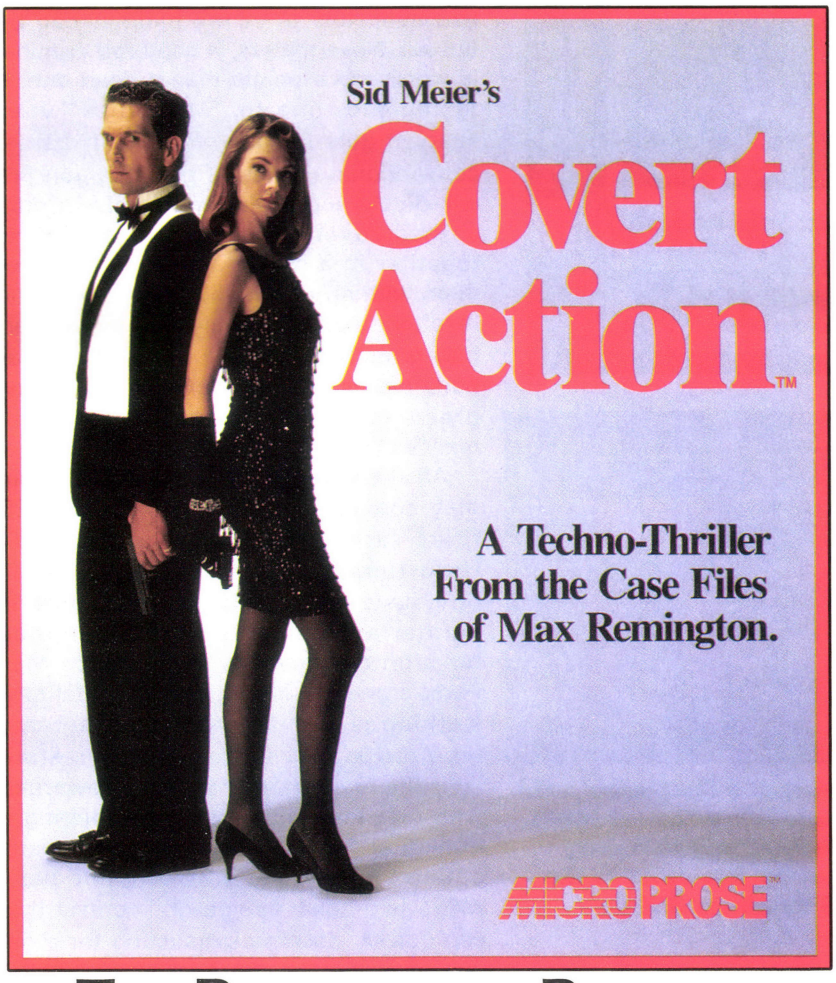
NARC

ACCLAIM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

The first couple of pages in the *NARC* instruction booklet feature a letter to the video gamer from the CEO of Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. In it, *NARC* is



THE BEST OF THE PRESENT

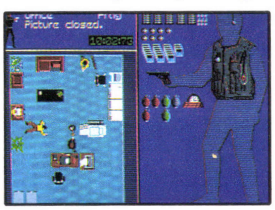
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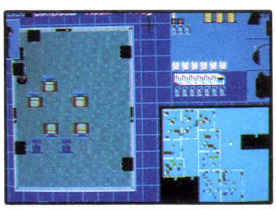
And intelligence counts, because your enemies are the real world threats of today: drug cartels, crime syndicates, terrorist organizations. And the only person you can trust is Sam Winston — master information-gatherer and vital resource.

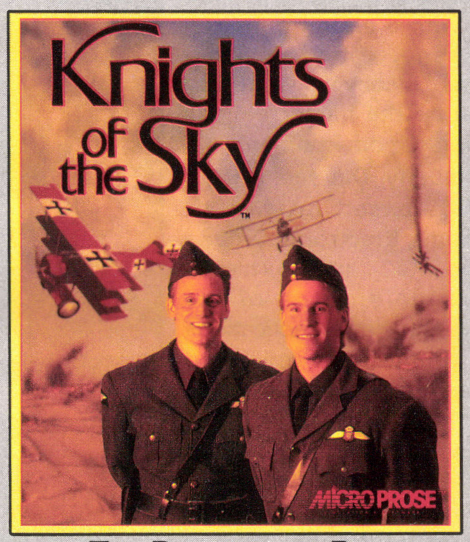
Out-think your enemies when you can. Outfight them if you must. But always — always keep your edge. It may be the only thing that keeps you alive.

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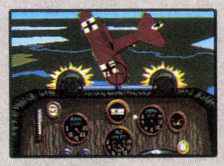








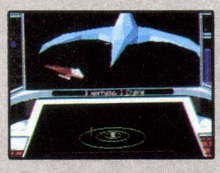
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described as the first NES title with a strong anti-drug message, and Acclaim claims "it conveys what may often be the harsh realities of the drug environment."

Actually, the scenario to *NARC*—based on the hit Williams Electronic arcade game—is an extreme oversimplification of the real-life societal implications and complexities regarding the use of illegal substances in this country. But what Acclaim's *NARC* does—and does best—is take the timely issue of the war on drugs and make it the backdrop for an immensely challenging action game.





Williams Electronics' wild arcade shoot-'em-up *NARC*, with its strong anti-drug message, has come to the NES thanks to Acclaim.

The game scenario takes place in 1997, and not too surprisingly, the drug problem has become worse than it already is today. A government operation, Narcotics Opposition, has determined that all illegal drug trafficking is being led by, rather conveniently, one person—somebody they call simply "Mr. Big."

N.O. has enlisted you and a friend, under the code names "Max Force" and "Hit Man," to undertake a covert operation to bring down this entire drug cartel and the big guy himself. That is, if you define "covert" as rampaging through city streets and buildings, firing off machine guns and rocket launchers. In other words, N.O.—with your help—intends to solve the nation's drug crisis within a matter of minutes. In the video-gaming world, *anything* is possible, I guess.

There are nine levels of play in *NARC* that need to be completed before you face off with Mr. Big. Enemies to deal with include a motley assortment of gun-wielding drug traffickers, helicopters, attacking pit bulls and, somewhat out of place here, swarms of killer insects. Helpful items that enemies drop and that you should pick up are packs of machine-gun rounds, rocket bombs and access cards that open certain doors.

A sports car named "NarcMobile" (as expected) is available for Max Force and Hit Man to hop into. It comes in handy for committing effortless hit-and-runs on the bad guys, but be careful. Wrecking this car is a cinch to do if you're reckless with your driving.

Another unique way of doing in your enemies is arresting them. This can be done by simply standing over them. However, not all of the baddies can be busted. Nevertheless, a captured criminal is worth more points than a dead one. If taking the time to "Mirandize" your suspect gets in the way of your game, conventional rounds of machine-gun fire will do the job easier and quicker. Come across several of the drug peddlers together in a group and you can greet them with an incoming rocket bomb. The resultant explosion will blow them apart into numerous, flailing limbs and other body pieces that rain down from the sky, presumably illustrating the "harsh realities" of the drug environment.

All the standard and expected game play conventions of other similar NES titles are found here in *NARC*. Unfortunately, one crucial thing is obviously and sorely missed: There is neither a documented game-continue function nor any way to replenish Max Force's and Hit Man's precious lifelines. Nothing is available for the inner-city warriors to pick up to partially restore their life energy—nor are they rewarded with maximum energy for completing a level. Coupled with the lack of a continue option and already intense game play, *NARC* is a "play as you go" contest that can quickly become exhausting for most players except the very best.

Thus, just getting past the first three levels successfully is a challenge—a major accomplishment if you're playing alone. Secret maneuvers, hidden cheats and Easter eggs, if any, probably won't help you here. This is a video game of pure skill. So novices beware: Acclaim's *NARC* doesn't just cover tough territory, it *is* tough territory.

—Howard H. Wen

Acclaim Entertainment, Inc.
71 Audrey Ave.
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 922-2400

Mission: Impossible

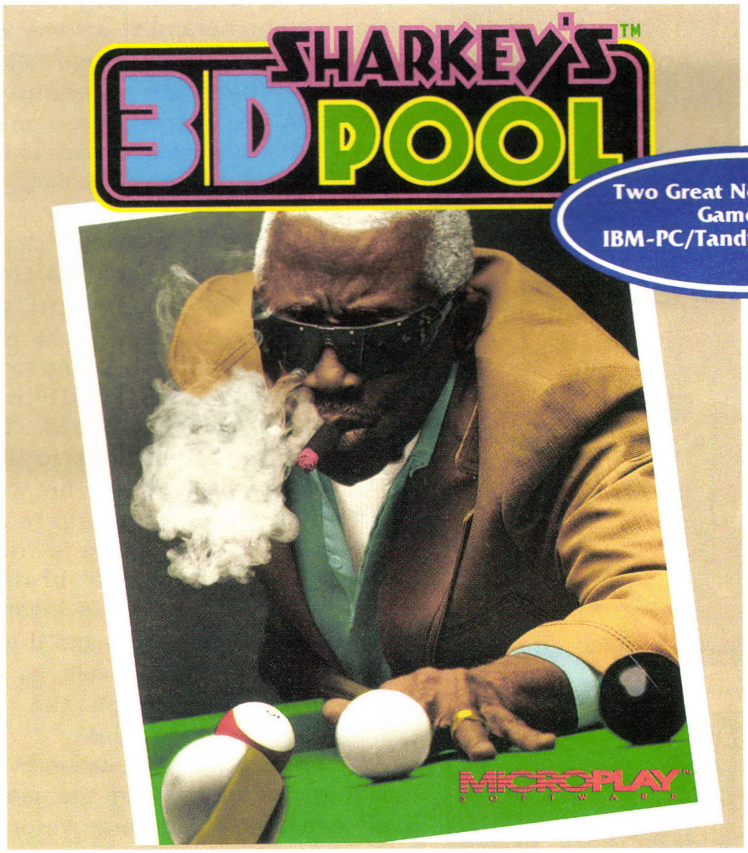
ULTRA

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($43.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

The screen is black as night...and then, the darkness is interrupted by the strike of

A New Angle On Billiards Action



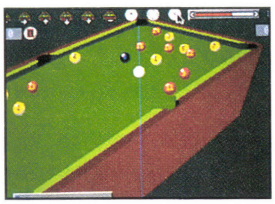
You can't play pool hanging from the ceiling, yet that's exactly what other billiards games seem to expect, because all they show is a flat, top-down picture of the table.

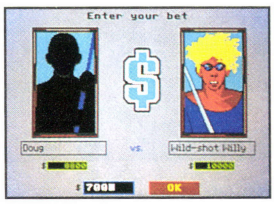
That's no way to play pool, and everbody knows it. *Sharkey's 3-D Pool* presents billards the way it really is — in full 3-D. Rotate the table to examine shots from *any angle you want*. And when you find the best one, you have complete control over power and english.

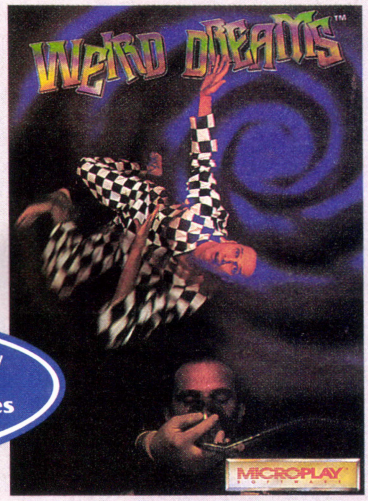
Play 8-Ball, 9-Ball, 14.1 Continuous or Rotation, all against the computer or another player. A tournament option features automatic seeding and optional betting; computer opponents have varying levels of skill. A Trick Shot Editor lets you try any of 20 classic shots, or it lets you design your own.

The choice is this: you can play *Sharkey's 3-D Pool* and walk around the table, checking all the angles; or you can play another billiards game, and just hang from the ceiling. But hanging has always been for bats — sharks like to move.









Some Dreams Shouldn't Come True

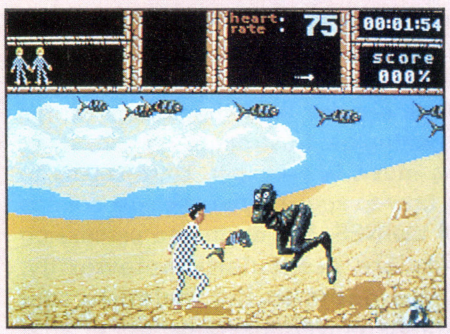
You're trapped in a land filled with places and things that can't possibly exist: carnivorous rose bushes eager for afternoon brunch, knife-wielding little girls, totem pole heads hopping on kangaroo bodies under skies full of fish.

Dodge the pyschopathic lawn mower, survive the inside of a cotton candy machine and avoid the giant wasp. Figure out what the grandfather clock is trying to say; and for God's sake look out for those malicious bats!

There's also an impassable swamp, a hall full of mirrors and a bouncing soccer ball that devours the unwary — and then burps.

And all you must do to make it through this world of nightmares and mysterious hazards alive is piece together a puzzle that defies sanity. Get ready for the most unusual adventure you've ever encountered, in the most dangerous world you've ever imagined.

Your mind.



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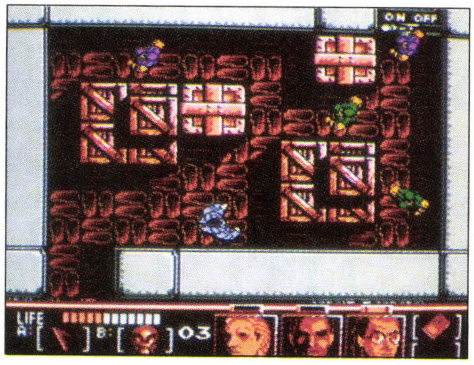
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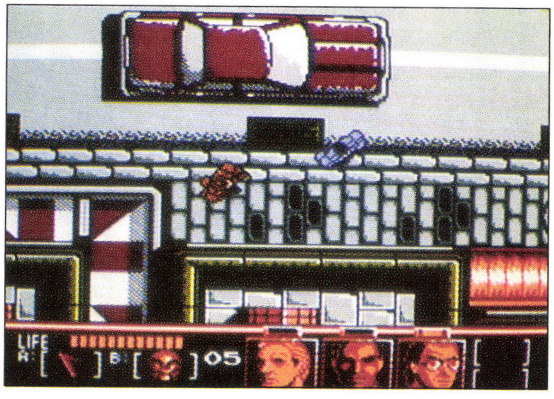
MICROPLAY SOFTWARE

CIRCLE #131 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

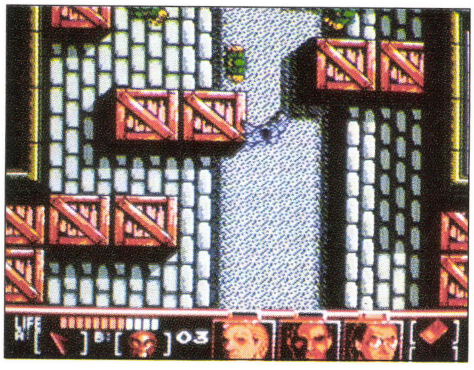
a match. A shrill musical note wavers, as if holding its breath. A fuse is lit, and the pounding theme song begins....

No, you're not watching the popular (and recently revived) *Mission: Impossible* TV show, you're playing Ultra's *Mission: Impossible* for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to rescue the eminent scientist Dr. O, and his secretary, who have been kidnapped by a ruthless terrorist organization known as the Sinister Seven. As an agent of the Impossible Mission Force (IMF), you'll battle your way from Moscow to Cyprus with nary a pause to catch your breath. You can control one of three characters (Max, Grant or Nicholas), and you have the ability to change identities at any time.





Interestingly, all the game's scenarios are displayed from above, giving you a bird's-eye view of the action. Your agent is seen as a head between a pair of shoulders, and you can see his feet sticking out when he walks. It's an odd effect, and it takes a while to adjust to the unique perspective. Fortunately, the angle proves to be effective and gives a sense of realism lacking in games that give you an unobstructed side view.



When the agent you're controlling speaks to another character in the game, a message window shows a front view of that character's face, which helps to keep you involved on a more personal level. You'll also zip through a pair of shoot-'em-up sequences (speedboating and skiing) that give the game an extra "kick." However, if you're turned off by difficult games, you might want to try this one before you pick it up for keeps. It's pretty tough, though your character does have a lot of freedom to move around, and that keeps things from getting too frustrating.

The music is excellent; Ultra seems to know how to squeeze the choicest sounds out of the NES. The drum and percussion sounds are particularly noteworthy, adding a depth to the melodies that reflects the powerful seriousness of your mission. You can sense the mood with your eyes closed!

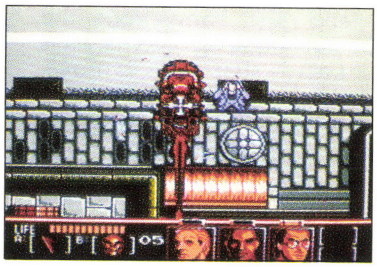
Mission: Impossible is guaranteed to raise a few eyebrows among those who criticize video-game violence. There's no bloodshed, but the IMF agents are completely merciless in their attempts to retrieve Dr. O., turning a rescue mission into an international rampage. Max carries a rifle and doesn't think twice about using it, even when enemies' backs are turned. Similarly, Nicholas whips his boomerang at anyone who even looks suspicious. Grant has no weapons other than sleeping-gas bombs, but he serves up a mean knuckle sandwich, which proves to be a painfully direct method of dealing with his opponents.

If one of your agents should slay an innocent bystander in the street scenes, a police helicopter will detain that agent until the next level. It should be comforting to see the game exhibit some type of social conscience, but this "punishment" amounts to little more than a light slap on the wrist. Of course, it doesn't help to see those same helpless pedestrians being randomly and brutally mowed down by your adversaries' speeding automobiles—and if your agent gets hit by a vehicle, he will be sent flying through the air, screaming in agonizing pain!

Thankfully, the vicious action is not meant to distract you from the game's basic concept. Video-game veterans should be able to look beyond the violent nature of *Mission: Impossible*; there's a great game hidden behind all that bone-crushing business.

—C. B.

Ultra Software
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510
(708) 215-5111



Ultra's *Mission: Impossible* brings all the intrigue and action of the television series to the NES.

Zany Golf

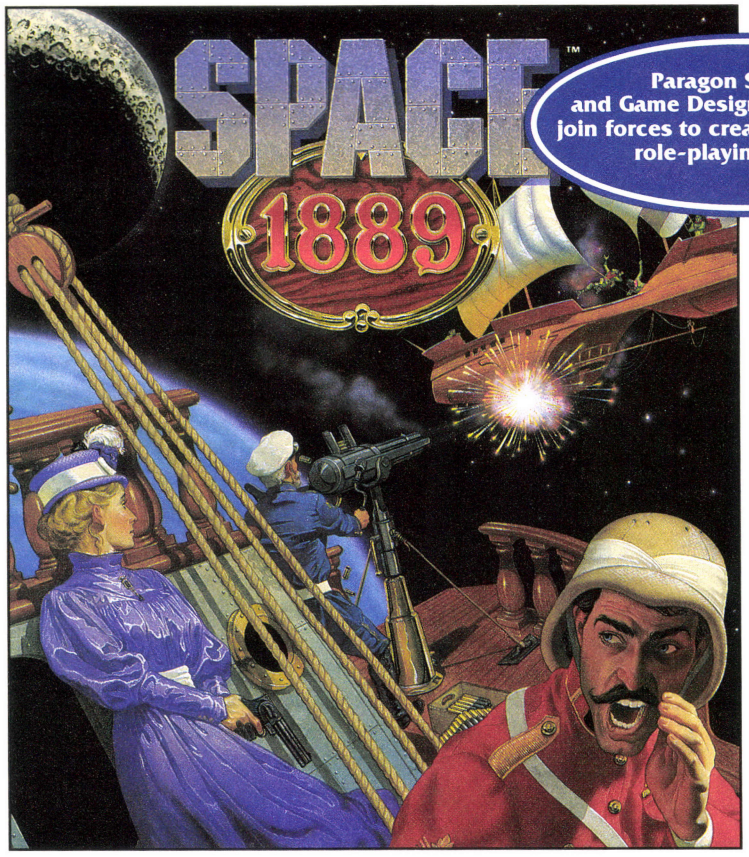
ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Sega Genesis (NA)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

I'll have ketchup on my golf ball, with some lettuce and tomato. Yes, and maybe...no, wait a minute! I must be on the second hole of *Zany Golf*—the hamburger hole. I'd better start at the beginning. *Zany Golf* is miniature golf like you've never seen before (unless you played it on a computer somewhere). This

Journey To Another Time — and Space



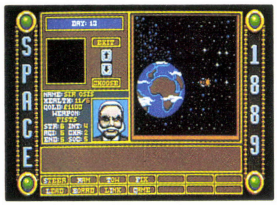
Paragon Software and Game Designers' Workshop join forces to create two computer role-playing classics!

Explore the universe envisioned in the classic writings of H.G. Wells and Jules Verne: where outer space is filled with "ether" that can be negotiated with modified sailing ships; and Mars, Venus and the Moon are inhabited by strange, sometimes hostile creatures.

Control five characters, endowed with special skills and abilities you've selected, as they pursue an elusive, advanced alien race. Visit the canals of Mars, the dangerous swamps of Venus and the mysterious underground caverns of the Moon. Even Earth — depicted with historical accuracy — is ripe for exploration and rife with intrigue, as you search for King Tut's tomb, visit the ruins of a Mayan city — perhaps even find the lost city of Atlantis!

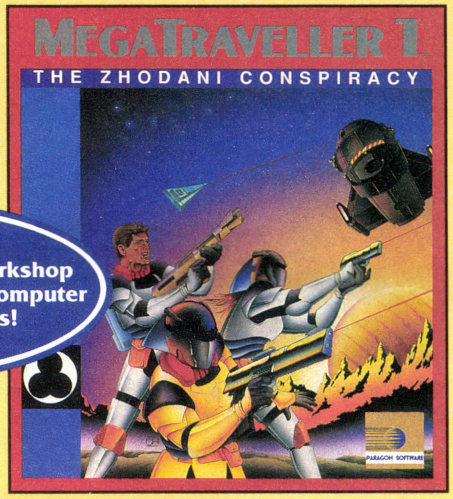
Standing in your way are corrupt German conspirators, a radical Martian religious cult, and the awesome intelligence of an advanced alien race — that doesn't want to be found.

The limited technology of the Victorian Age and the infinite mysteries of outer space. Who says history is boring?









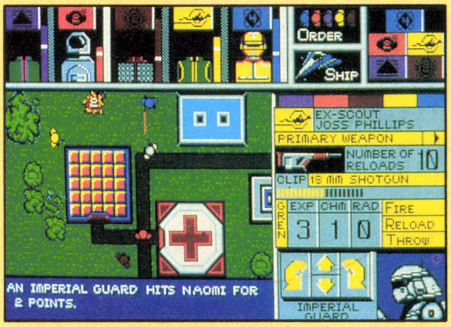
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And you'll control every move they make. From real-time battle sequences to piloting a starship to negotiating with tradesmen, customs officials and other personalities, you determine each of your character's actions, all the time.

With over 25 worlds to explore, hundreds of fascinating characters to meet, and dozens of plots and subplots, *MegaTraveller 1: The Zhodani Conspiracy* is a universe filled with high-tech, futuristic fun and excitement.

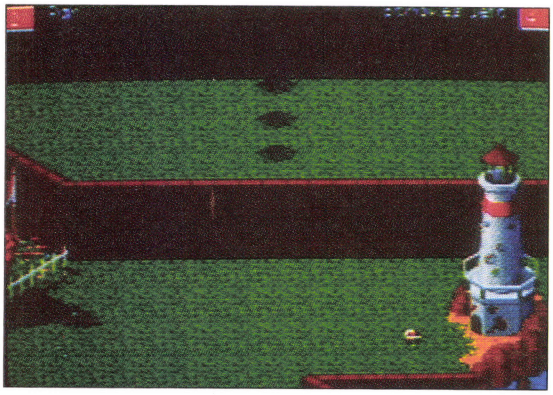


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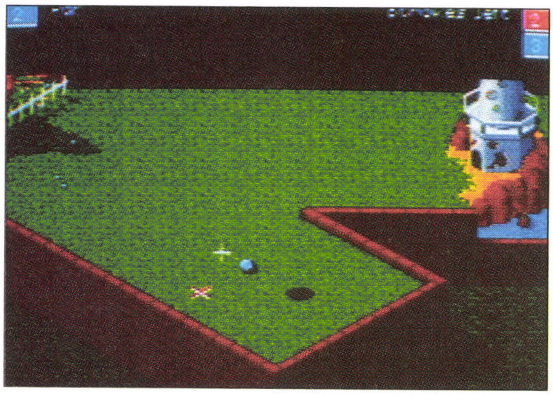
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PARAGON SOFTWARE™

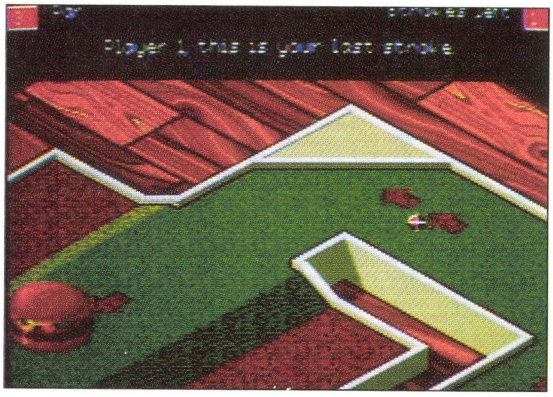
CIRCLE #132 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Genesis version is almost exactly like the computer version, with a few minor exceptions, which is both good and bad. It's good because *Zany Golf* is fun, funny and, well, zany. It's bad because the Genesis version is slow, slower and, well, clunkier.



It's too bad EA didn't take a little more time to reprogram this game for the Genesis system. The graphics are good, but not as great as those of the computer versions. The sound is okay, though not mind-blowing, and the game play—well the game play is slow. The screen scrolls slowly, the ball putters (sorry, pun intended) to a stop ever so gradually and the excitement tends to diminish, since everything seems to move in slow motion.



Electronic Arts' *Zany Golf* for the Genesis is one of the many computer translations we'll be seeing this company release for video-game systems.

That's not to say this is a terrible game. It's still fun to play, just disappointing that it isn't better. Also, the game is pretty easy; you'll probably beat it the first day you get it.

As in any golf game, your goal is to sink the ball in the hole using as few strokes as possible. However, in this game, you must be careful. You start with five strokes, and you gain strokes for completing a hole. Run out of strokes and it's back to square...I mean, hole one. And with all the various obstacles, it's tough!

The fun of this game is to try for extra strokes. There are several ways to get them. Random fairies appear and will award you three strokes if you hit them. A random timer bonus may appear, which allows you to gain extra strokes for completing the hole quickly. Finally, some holes award extra strokes for completing difficult maneuvers (like getting the ball into the moving gate of the castle on hole six). Of course, getting a hole-in-one, possible on several holes, is a good way to score extra strokes, as well as save your remaining strokes.

The holes themselves are great. One is a pinball game, another is a game similar to *Breakout* (which was the secret tenth hole on the computer version, but was moved when they dropped the Magic Carpet hole from the Genesis version).

The most difficult hole is the ninth—the energy hole. This par-five hole is a double-decker, futuristic nightmare. In addition to the laser beams and other electrical phenomena that populate this hole, you'll have to hit two buttons to activate the vacuum, get sucked up to the upper level then get past the numerous traps that send you back down to the lower level.

To make things worse, there are orbs that either attract or repel the ball as it goes by. If you're clever, you can use these orbs to your advantage and curve around the trap holes. If you're merely human, you'll watch the ball go down, down, down, back to the lower deck.

All this is indicative of the *Zany Golf* experience. *Zany Golf*, for all its flaws, does offer some challenge. Completing the game isn't too hard, but getting better and better scores is the real test. If it were only a little faster....

—Rusel DeMaria

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

Insector-X

SAGE'S CREATION

For the Sega Genesis ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

With *Insector-X*, you get your typical game plot scenario: The Bagroids—tiny insect aliens from the Bagron Empire—are out to conquer the planet. Earth's only chance to make it is Kyte, the sole survivor

of a miniature humanoid race, the Insectors, that was destroyed by the mean-spirited Bagroids. Equipped with a pair of mechanical wings, Kyte sets out on a mission for both vengeance and humankind's salvation.



Insector-X, a bug-infested shoot-'em-up from Sage's Creation for the Genesis, is an extremely tough battle against all forms of nasty insects.

None of this really matters, though. To the gamer, *Insector-X* plays exactly the way it looks. It's a scrolling, side-view shoot-'em-up. You're in control of what appears to be a cross between a G.I. Joe figure and a wasp. (This is Kyte.) The enemy that you lay your wrath upon is an assortment of elaborately armed insects. (These are the Bagroids.) But since there are no cartoon intermissions in between levels or any other on-screen elements to back up the above-mentioned story line, *Insector-X* could really be about almost anything. Its scenario is unimportant.



Fortunately, this in no way hinders game play. The object is to simply shoot, shoot, shoot and move, move, move when the enemy bugs shoot, shoot, shoot at you, you, you. Repetitive play, that old arcade gaming standby, is the key element here. And there are five levels of it, with settings such as an Egyptian desert, a city sewer system and the final showdown at the alien bugs' underground headquarters.

Things to blast include anything and everything that has ruined a family's summer outdoor dinner: wasps, mosquitoes, bees, ticks, spiders, fleas—you name it, you get to shoot it in *Insector-X*. They get to do the same to you, of course, spitting venom that either is aimed at you or explodes in all directions in midair. Be sure to watch out for the lovely petunias spewing deadly pollen and the giant, pulsating worms shooting out of the ground too.

At the end of a level is—surprise!—that "Really Big Bug" you must destroy before you're allowed to progress in the game (an overgrown wasp, grasshopper, moth, etc.). Each of these RBBs has an Achille's heel. Discover it and you can destroy the insect monstrosity. But if you don't, well, then you're in for some real rough play.

Your G.I. Joe/wasp guy (Kyte) is armed only with a rapid-fire, single-shot shooter. Not bad for starters, but not enough for this bug exterminator and the bugs he has to deal with. Some of the insects will leave tokens behind after they've been shot. Gathering these helpful items can change Kyte's weapon into a double- or wide-area shooter. Others will strengthen the power of weapons and provide free points or extra lives. Some of the bugs even drop their special weapons packs when destroyed. Bug-guy Kyte can then take and use these for his own purposes.

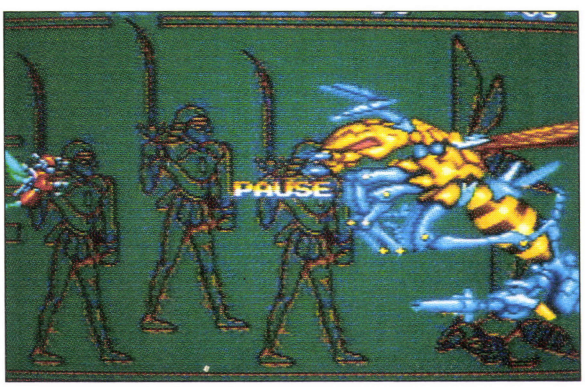
Insector-X suffers from no loss of great graphics and sound. Music and visuals are top-notch. Particularly beautiful—and menacing—are the Really Big Bugs. Especially unique is the way Kyte meets his death. He bursts into bug guts accompanied by a *SPLAT!* sound—the kind real insects made when they hit a windshield.

Game play isn't difficult—it's just plain *hard*. This is definitely one of the most challenging shoot-'em-ups for the Genesis. Learning to play *Insector-X* is a cinch. Mastering it, even when the game is set on "easy," isn't.

Insector-X does for side-view shoot-'em-ups what *Altered Beast* did for side-view beat-'em-ups. Yet, don't be fooled by the above number ratings. *Insector-X* scores high marks because of its superficials. In terms of originality, which our ratings system doesn't cover, it is sadly lacking. Recommended for bug blasters only.

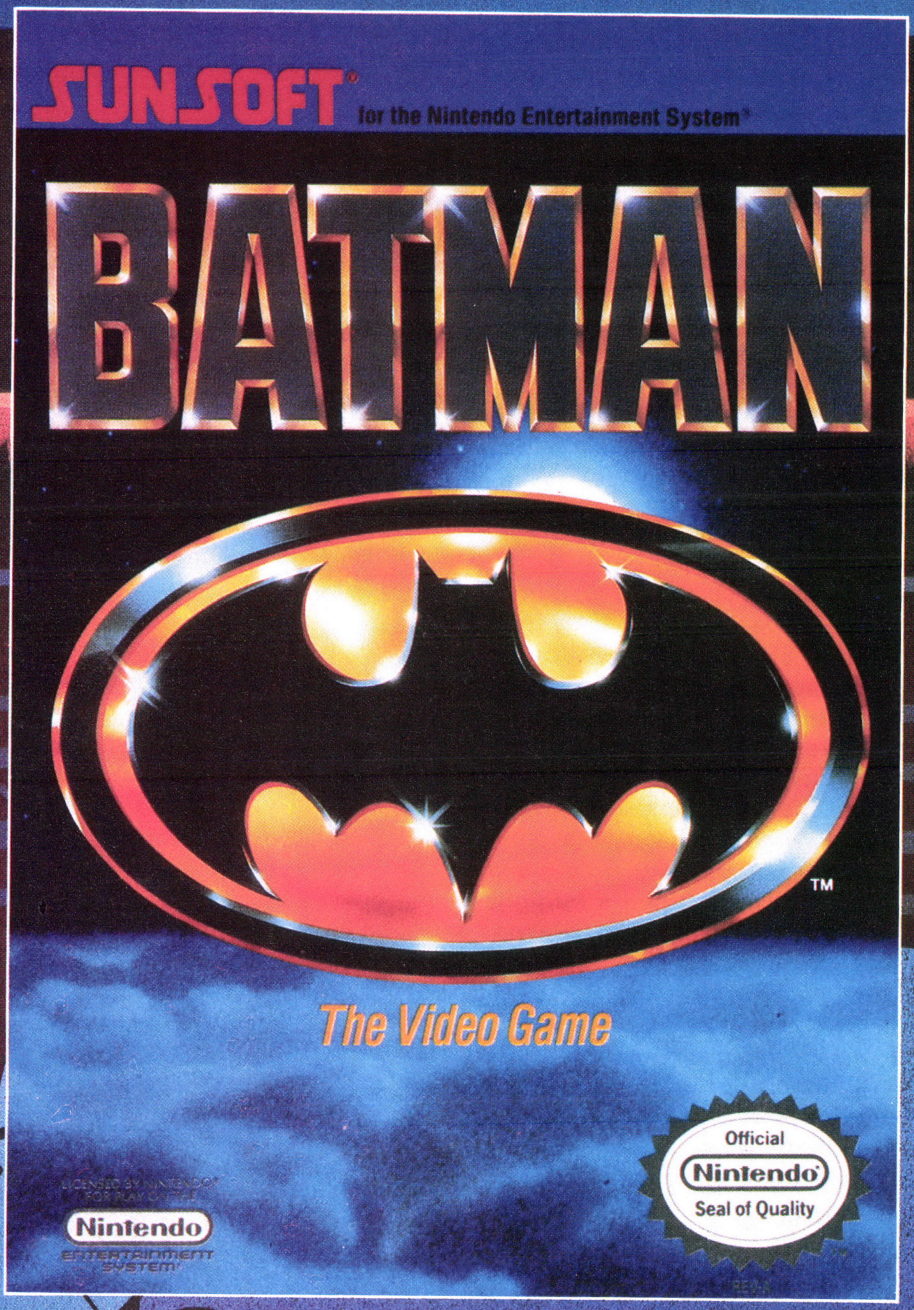
—H. H. W.

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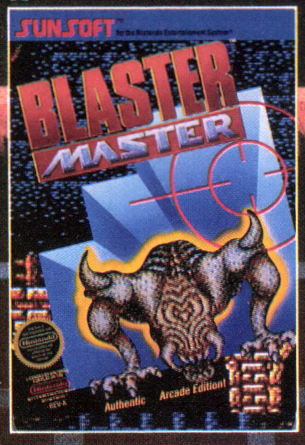
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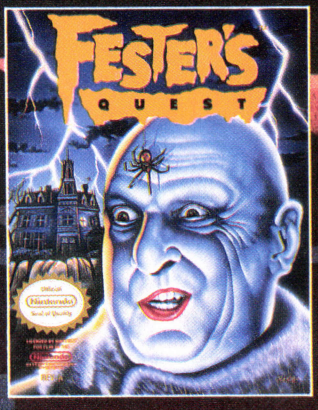
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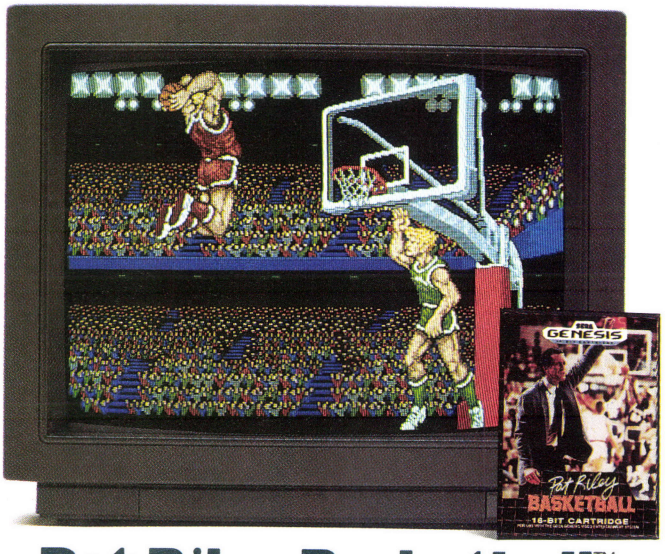
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CIRCLE #182 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

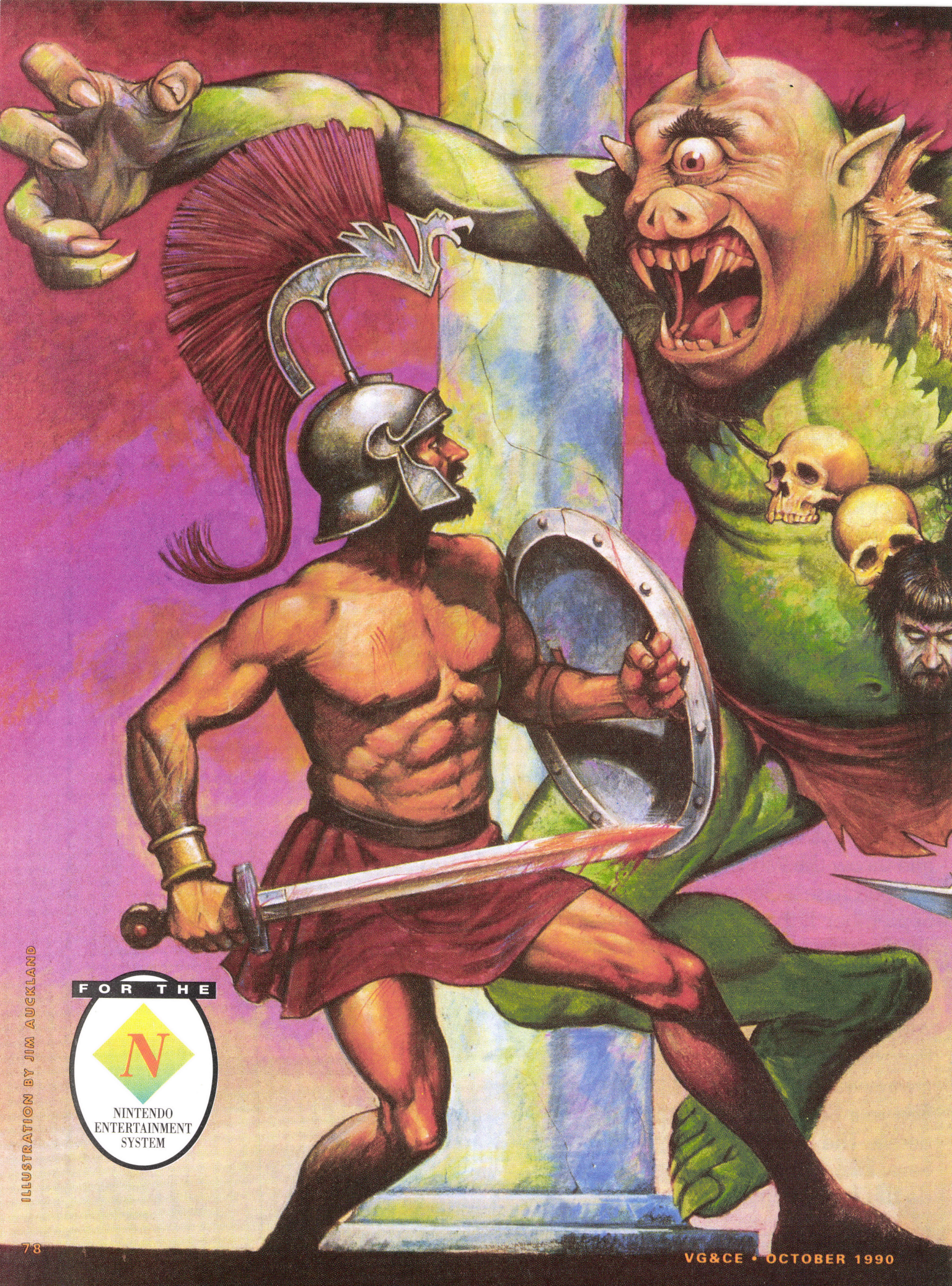


ILLUSTRATION BY JIM AUCKLAND



THE GODS THEMSELVES

A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO

THE BATTLE OF OLYMPUS

by Clayton Walnum

WARNING: If you already own ***The Battle of Olympus***, we suggest you play it before reading the information presented here. Studying our maps prematurely may decrease your enjoyment of the game. However, if you have yet to purchase ***The Battle of Olympus***, it should be safe to browse through this article in order to decide if the game is something you'd enjoy. It's unlikely you'll remember many of the clues once you do start to play.

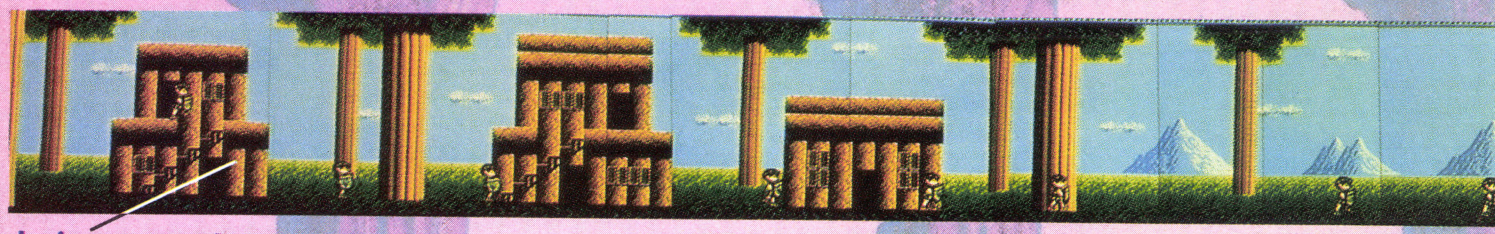
Welcome to the wild and dangerous world of mythology! It's one thing to read about these strange creatures and powerful gods in school books, but quite another to jump in, sword in hand, and battle your way through one ancient city after another. You must be in top form to rescue the love of your life from the grips of the underworld.

This month we'll take an in-depth look at the first half of this mythological adventure. On our journey we'll meet up with Lamia, Hydra, the Lion of Nemea, Cyclops and other horrible creatures, as well as several ancient gods. We'll explore Arcadia, Peloponnisos, Attica and Argolis and gather such magical items as the Staff of Fennel, the Harp of Apollo, the Shield of Athena and the Sandals of Hermes.

We'll complete our journey next month. See you then.

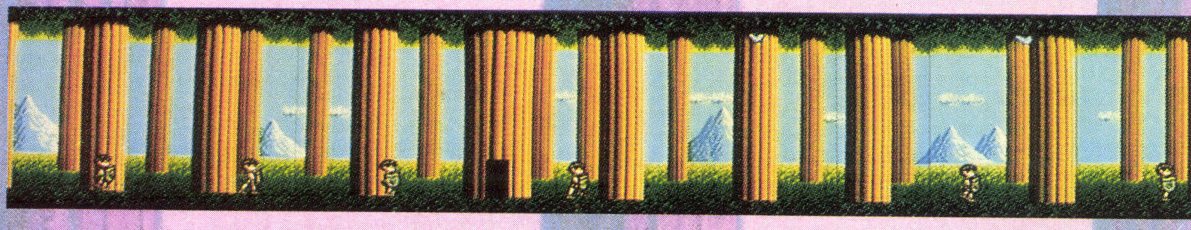
Auckland

STRIP 1, ARCADIA 1

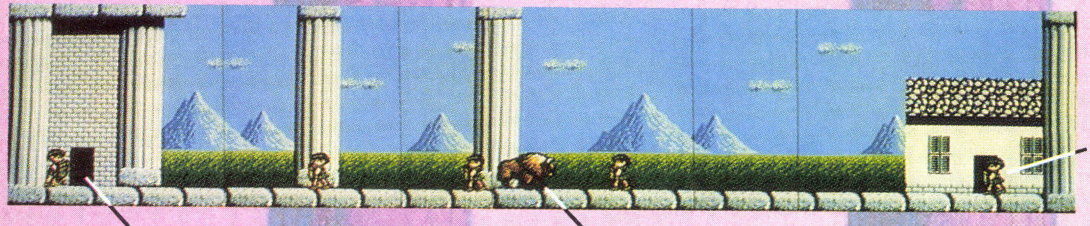


You begin your quest here in this small town. Make sure you talk to everyone; write down everything they tell you. All clues are important.

STRIP 2, ARCADIA 2



STRIP 3, ARCADIA 3

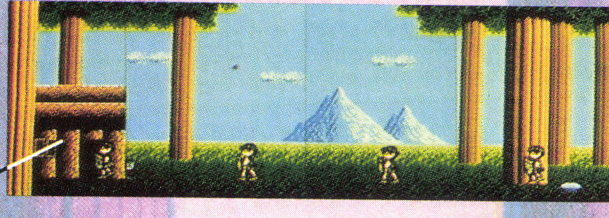


This door leads back to Strip 2.

This is the temple of Zeus. Come to this temple first so that Zeus can arrange for the other gods to help you.

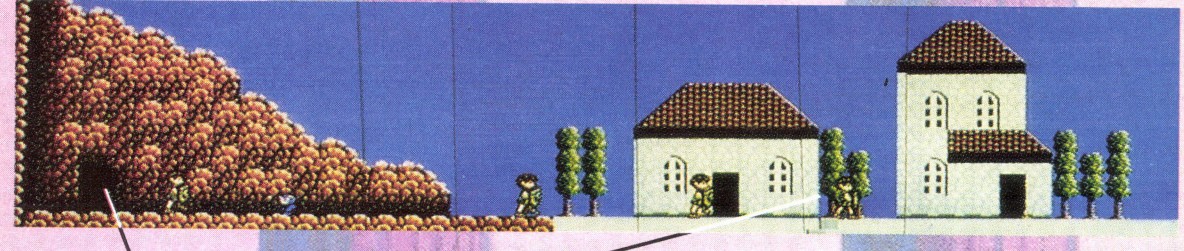
The bull is easy to beat. Time your swings well when he attacks, and victory will soon be yours.

STRIP 4, ARCADIA 4



The cabin here is the entrance to Argolis.

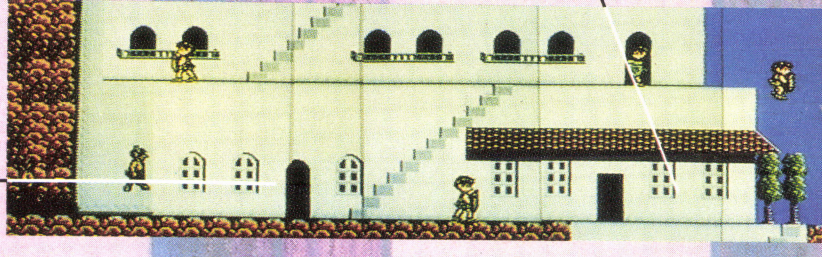
STRIP 5, ATTICA 1



Watch for stairways leading down.

This door leads back to Strip 2.

STRIP 6, ATTICA 2

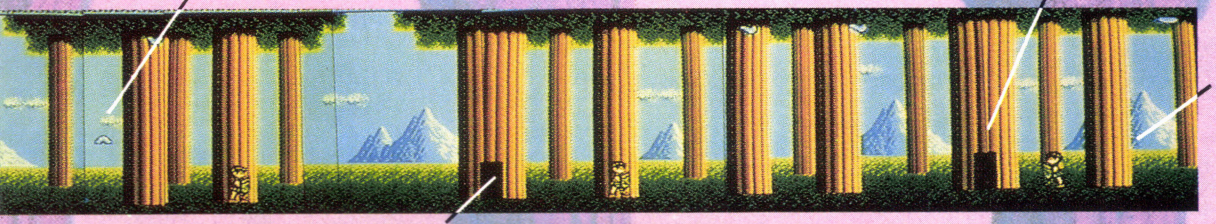


Here's another stairway.

After you complete a quest for this man, he'll give you some important information.

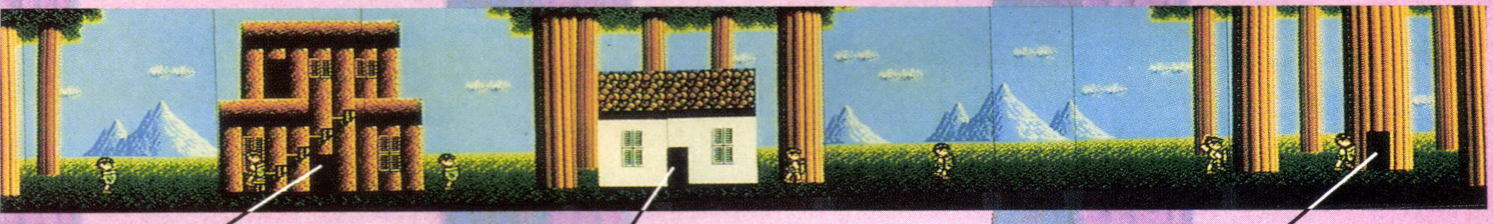
The small inchworms that fall from the trees are most easily beaten by smacking them before they hit the ground.

You'll get clues in some of the trees, too.



Continue right to Strip 2.

This doorway leads to Strip 4 and eventually to Argolis. Enter here only after you've built up your strength. Specifically, first find Athena's shield.

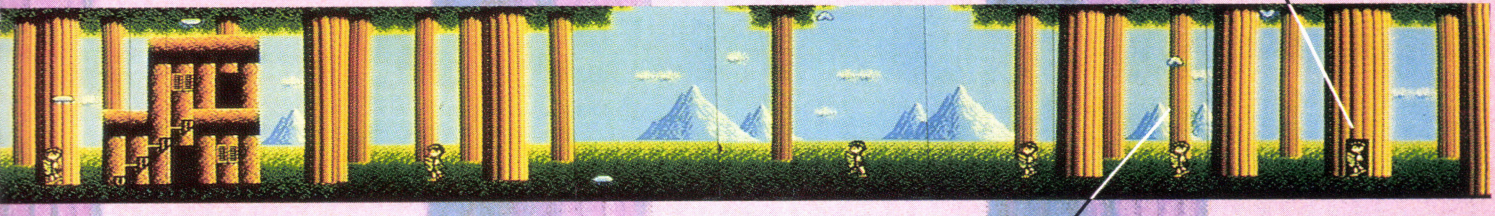


The bottom door in this cabin will take you to Attica.

This house leads to Strip 3 and to the temple of Zeus.

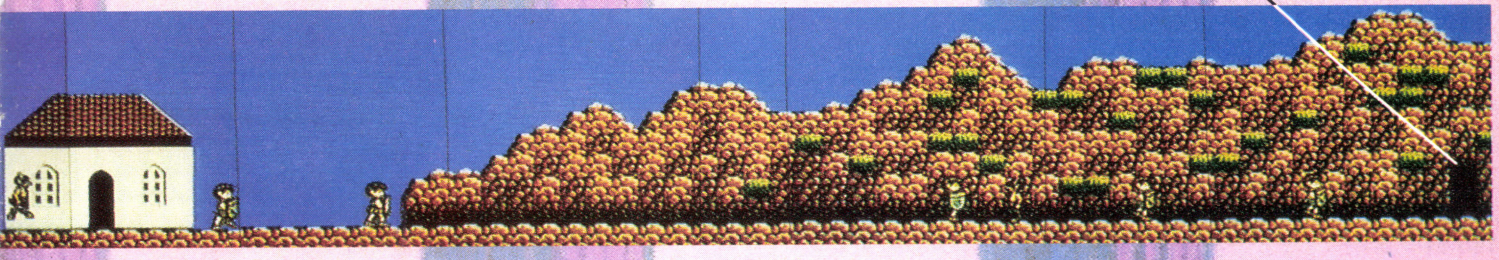
Take this doorway to Peloponnisos.

This door leads back to Strip 1.



To fully restore your strength and gather olives, take some time to battle inchworms. You'll need 50 olives in the caverns of Argolis.

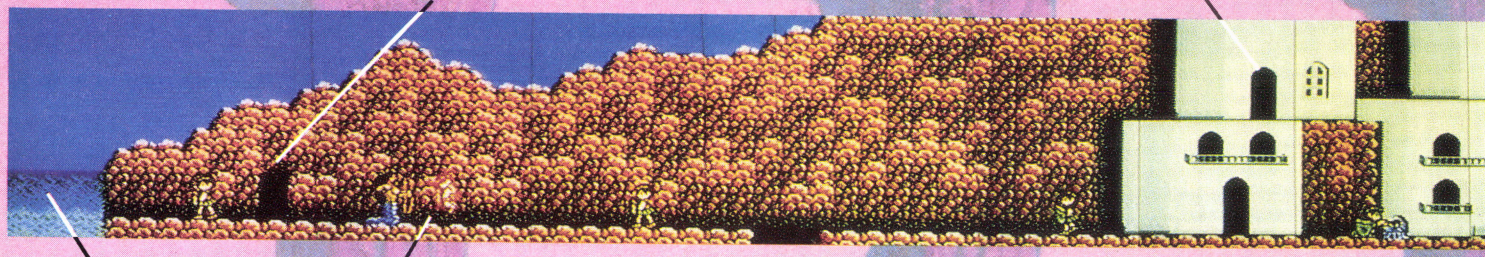
Beyond this doorway lies the area shown in Strip 8, including the temple of Athena. If you continue to the right, rather than entering the door, you'll come to Gaea, who guards the door to Phthia. Gaea can be awakened only with the ocarina.



STRIP 7, ATTICA 3

When the Lamia is dead, this room, which contains something important, will appear.

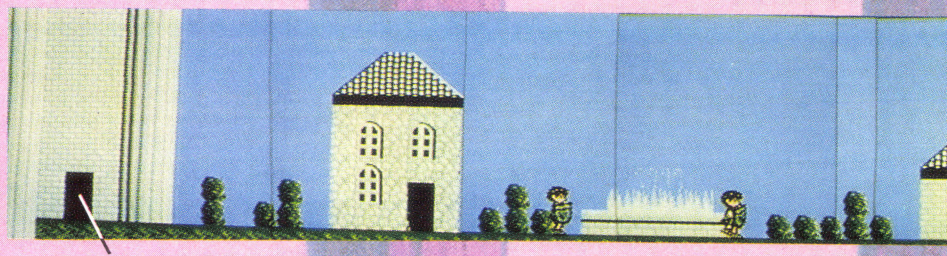
The woman in this room has a terrible problem and will handsomely reward any adventurer who helps her.



When you learn how to ride a dolphin, you can cross this ocean to get to Phrygia.

Don't try to take on the Lamia until you have Athena's shield. When you stand away from the Lamia, her arrows will bounce off the shield. However, to defeat her, you have to get in close; she is vulnerable only on her serpent's tail. Run toward her, jump and dive in low, crouching to swing at her tail. She's tough to beat, so keep practicing.

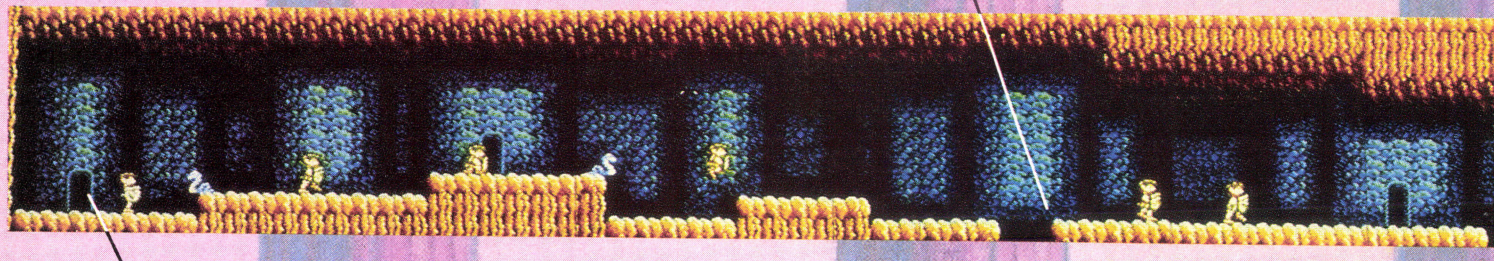
STRIP 8, ATTICA 3



Take this doorway back to Strip 6.

STRIP 10, ARGOLIS 2

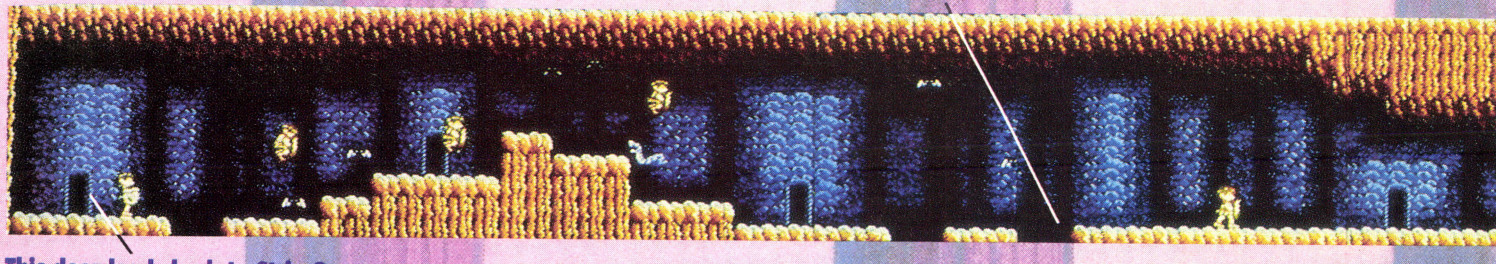
Falling down these pits means instant death.



Exit here to Strip 9.

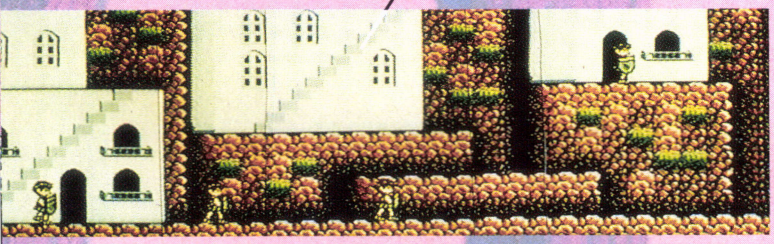
STRIP 11, ARGOLIS 3

Not all pits are deadly. This one will bring you to a secret cave of salamanders, in which an old man will sell you ambrosia for 50 olives.



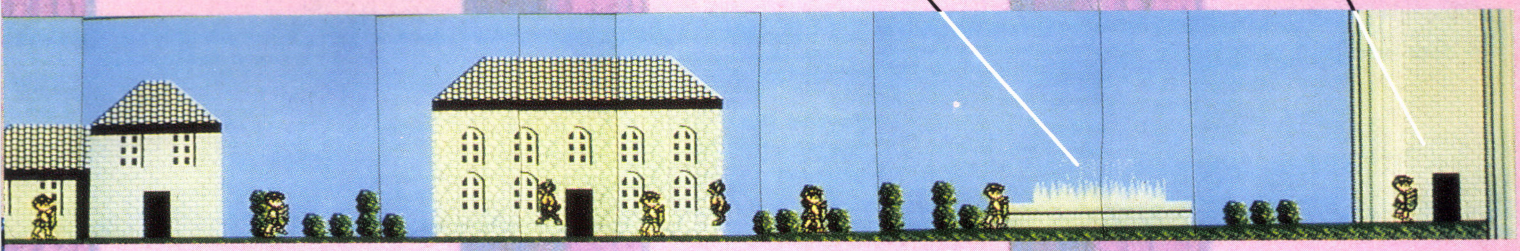
This door leads back to Strip 9.

This stairway leads up to Strip 6.

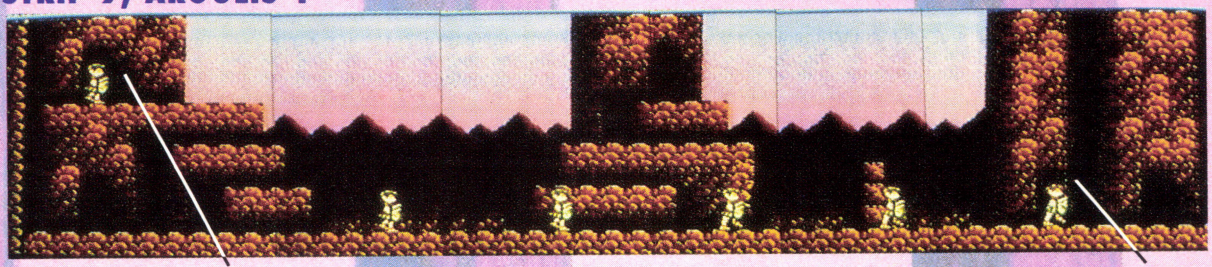


Here's the temple of Athena. Kneel before her throne, and press the "B" button to get the shield.

Kneel at this fountain and you'll be healed.

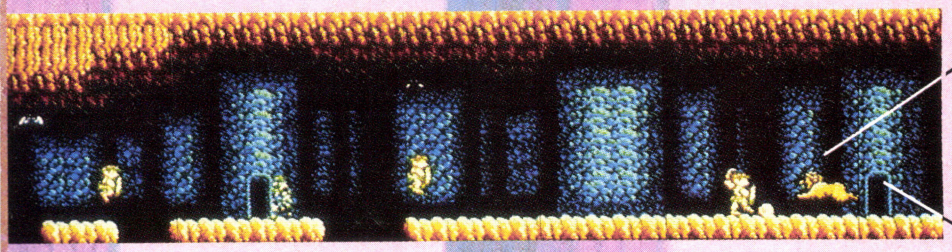


STRIP 9, ARGOLIS 1



This door leads back to Strip 4.

The left-hand door here takes you to Strip 10. The right-hand door takes you to Strip 11.

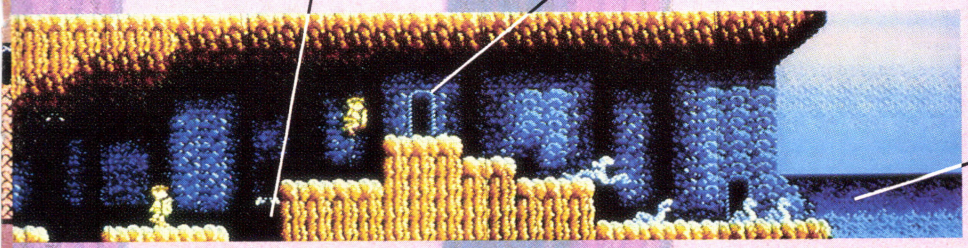


To get to Prometheus, you must defeat the lion that guards his chamber. Keep swinging. He's a wimp.

Beyond this door, Prometheus will teach you the secret of the Staff of Fennel.

Here's another pit leading to a secret chamber. The skins of the red salamanders are valuable. Gather as many as you can. You'll also find a magical fountain here that will heal you and fill your flask (if you've found one) with the healing water.

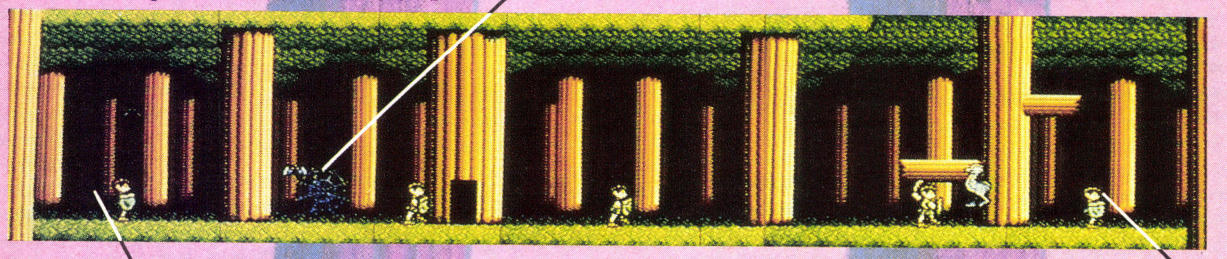
This door leads to the temple of Hermes. Unfortunately, Hermes has had a meeting with Zeus, so he isn't around. Check in here first, and then go back to the temple of Zeus.



Beyond this ocean lies Crete.

STRIP 12, PELOPONNISOS 1

Use the fire abilities of the Staff of Fennel to burn away the cobwebs. Don't get trapped in the webs. It's very difficult to get out.



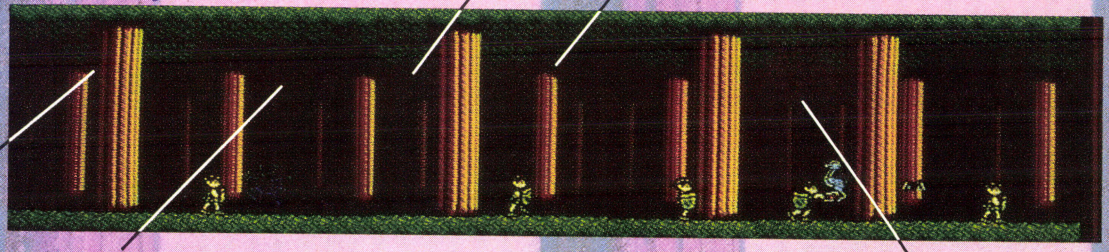
This door leads back to Strip 2.

Exit here to Strip 13.

STRIP 14, PELOPONNISOS 3

Beyond these trees waits the temple of Apollo. Apollo will give you a magical harp.

Here's another way to Strip 15.



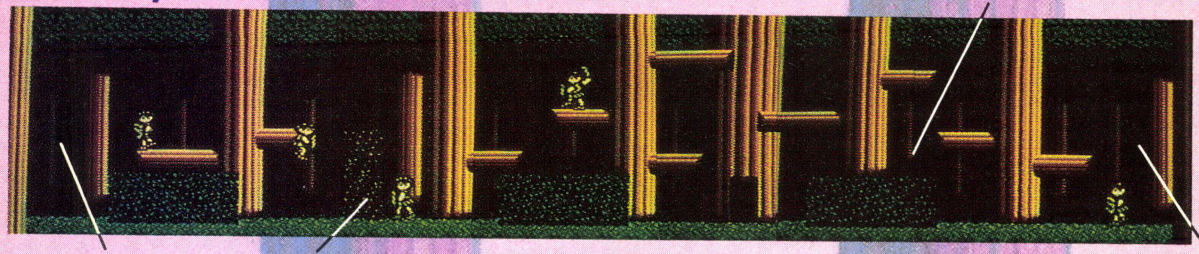
This is an entrance to Strip 15.

Step between these trees to get to Strip 13.

This is another path back to Strip 13.

STRIP 16, PELOPONNISOS 5

Lure the bats away before you attempt to cross the deadly thorn bushes.



This way to Strip 17.

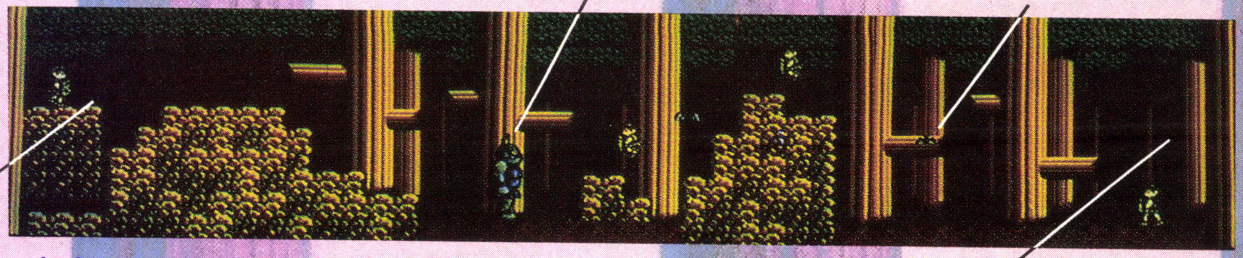
This thorn bush can be burned away with the Staff of Fennel.

This way back to Strip 15.

STRIP 18, PELOPONNISOS 7

The Cyclops throws boulders quickly, one after the other, making it difficult for you to get in close with your sword. As with all the bosses in this challenging game, you'll need to practice before you win.

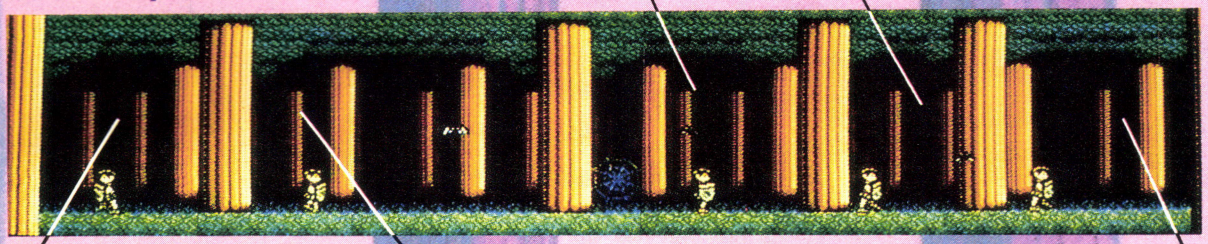
Get on this tree's branch, and pound with your weapon. You might knock a nice surprise down from the trees.



When the Cyclops is dead, the doorway to Laconia will appear.

This way back to Strip 15.

STRIP 13, PELOPONNISOS 2



This passage leads back to Strip 12.

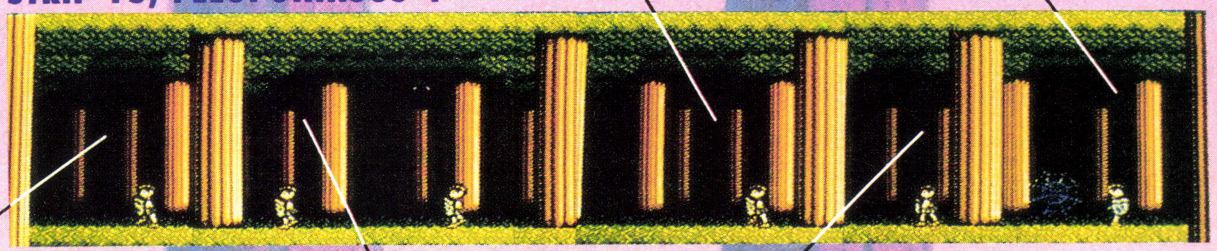
Enter here to get to Strip 14.

Check between the trees for important clues and for exits to other areas of the maze.

Go between the trees here to get to Strip 14.

This way to Strip 15.

STRIP 15, PELOPONNISOS 4



Here's another exit back to Strip 14.

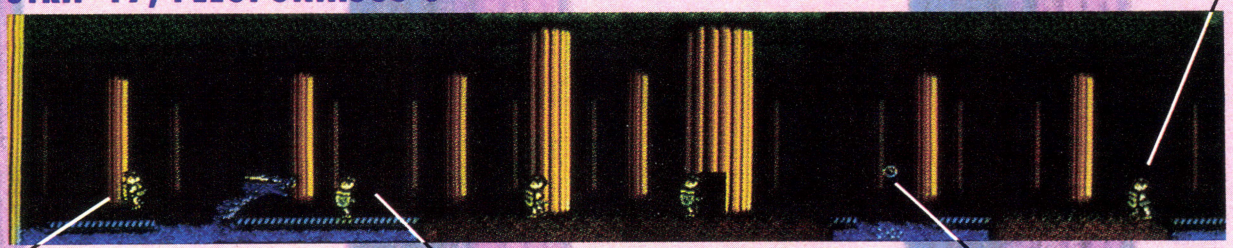
This way back to Strip 13.

Exit here to get to Strip 14.

This way to Strip 18; but don't enter here until you have the sword from the Spirit of the Forest.

Step between the trees here, and you'll be at Strip 16.

STRIP 17, PELOPONNISOS 6



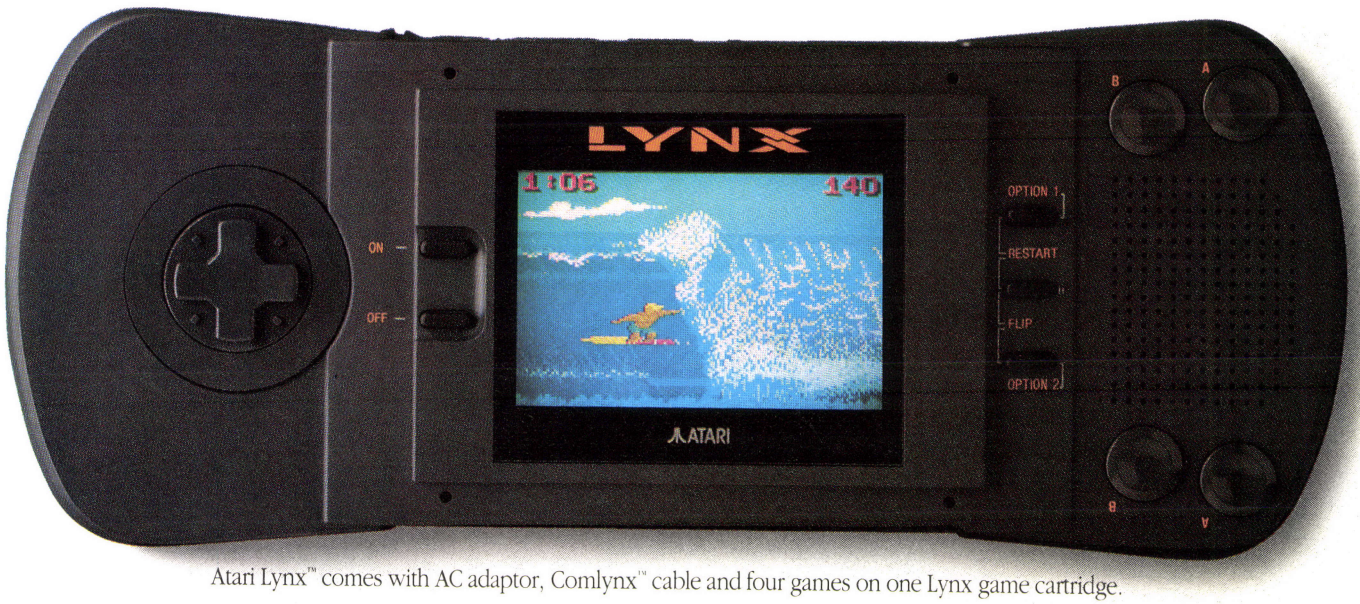
After crossing a couple of bridges, you wind up here.

When the Hydra is dead, this bridge will take you to the Spirit of the Forest. She will give you a sword with which you can defeat the Cyclops.

The Hydra is difficult to beat; you'll need to practice. Watch where the bubbles come up from the swamp. That's the area from which the Hydra will leap. The Hydra leaps in a variety of ways. If you move forward slowly and back off after each attack, only the Hydra's longest jump will reach you. Smack him with your weapon just before he hits you. Ignore his other shorter attacks. Always be ready for the long jump.

The bubbles in this swamp are fatal to the touch.

Warning: The Foll
Chills, Dizziness And



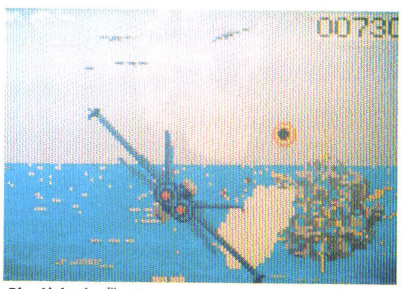
Atari Lynx™ comes with AC adaptor, Comlynx™ cable and four games on one Lynx game cartridge.



Gauntlet®: Smash arcade hit. The enchanted Star Gem has crashed to earth. Capture it from evil creatures before they use its magical strength to destroy man. 1 to 4 players.

Lots of games are available on compact cartridges, with more being developed as we speak.





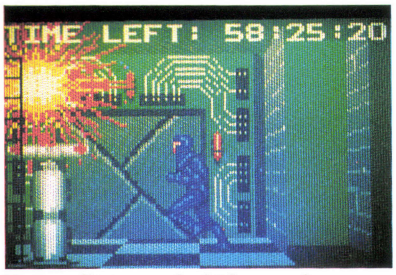
Blue Lightning™: Fly a top secret combat jet while avoiding missiles, ice fields, canyon walls and the dark of night.



Plug any standard headset into the Lynx for more realistic 4 channel sound

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owing May Cause Shortness Of Breath.

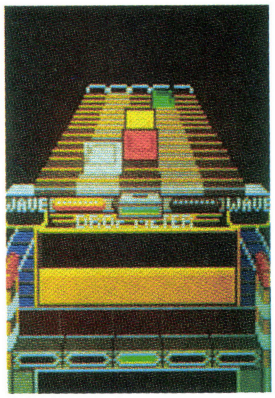


Electrocop™: Rescue the kidnapped daughter of the president. Invade the Steel Complex where dangerous robot traps protect the Criminal Brain.

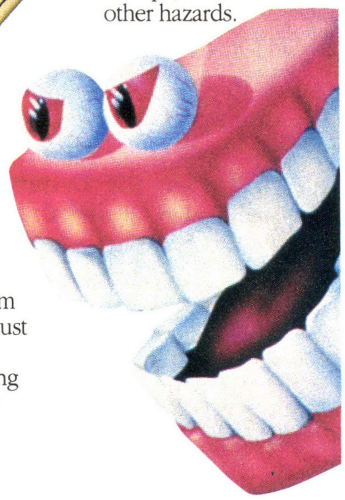


California Games®: Surf your brains out. Skateboard the Half Pipe. Juggle the Foot Bag. Slam off the desert berms on your BMX bike.

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CIRCLE #133 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint!

Blow the dust off those old games and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper and send them to **VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt.** *The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!*



Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button

Ghouls 'n' Ghosts

(Sega for the Genesis)

Go to the options screen and select the last musical score (26) and the last sound effect (56). On the D-button, press and hold D and A, B and C, then press **START** to exit the options screen. If you've done this correctly, the titles will appear on-screen in Japanese. Thanks to Jacob Yanes of Cambridge, Massachusetts, for this find.

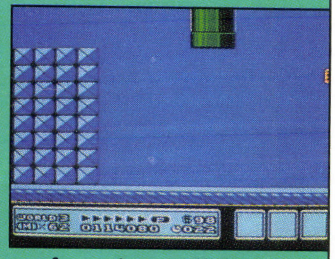




Super Mario Bros. 3

(Nintendo for the NES)

Andy Mitchell of Roseville, California, has come up with a great find. To make Mario (or Luigi) invisible, you must first get to World 3-9, then make your way to the second pipe (the first one going down). Once at the second pipe, you will notice a white block. Go to the block and kneel. After approximately five seconds, you'll fall through and end up behind the scenery. When you run quickly to the pipe and go down, if you're still behind the background, you'll become invisible. Notice the bubbles in the picture—that's where Mario is. Thanks for the hint, Andy.



(Note: The bullets can still kill you when you're running to the pipe, and you'll become visible again once you exit the water area.)





Super C

(Konami for the NES)

In our July 1990 installment of *Easter Egg Hunt*, we incorrectly provided the tip for starting the game with ten men. The correct code, from the title screen, is R, L, D, U, A, B, then **START**. We apologize for the mistake.

Mean Streets

Mean Streets is truly an advanced interactive adventure experience.

It's the year 2033. Your name is Tex Murphy, private investigator in San Francisco. You've been hired by the beautiful daughter of a university professor to uncover the facts about her father's death.

As you begin your investigation, you uncover the deaths of several prominent members of the scientific community. Are these deaths coincidental, or is something more sinister going on?

- You will interact with more than 27 characters which animate and respond to questions, bribes and threats.
- Some characters actually talk. This spectacular effect is achieved by synchronizing digitized animation with *Real Sound* ™.
- You'll crack high-tech security systems.
- You'll rummage through offices, warehouses, and factories as you search for vital clues.
- You'll risk your life in action-packed shootouts.

Mean Streets features *Real Sound* ™, our own proprietary technology that allows MS-DOS computers to play high quality digitized sound effects, music and speech WITHOUT HARDWARE.

ACTUAL 256 COLOR VGA SCREENS

Mean Streets has set a new standard for interactive adventure games!
—R. A. Frisk
Sugarland, Texas

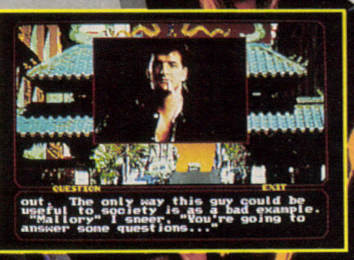
Beautiful! A new step ahead in computer entertainment.
—M. A. Platnick
Bluefield, WV

Mean Streets is a major technical breakthrough for the I.B.M.
—Electronic Gamer

Mean Streets is a dazzling product! A showpiece game for VGA machines.
—Video Games and Computer Entertainer

Mean Streets' Real Sound's quality of music, voice & special effects beats anything I've heard from my "Ad Lib"™...hands down!
—H. Nichols
CPAA

Animating digitized images and synchronizing them with great voice and sound simulation for IBM P.C. make Mean Streets more realistic than anything you may already have experienced. To call Mean Streets just another computer game is an understatement!
—Game Player's Strategy







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Phantasy Star II

(Sega for the Genesis)

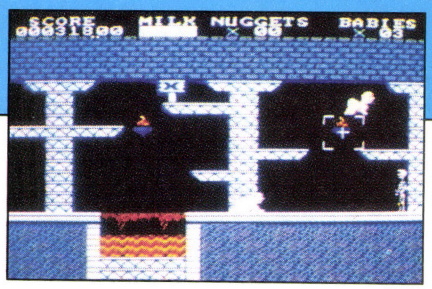
When going against the Mother Brain, you will usually get one turn then have to wait as it takes three—or as many as five—turns before returning to you. David Whittle, of Knoxville, Tennessee, has found a way to cause the Mother Brain to take only one turn at a time. Simply hold "B" during battles.

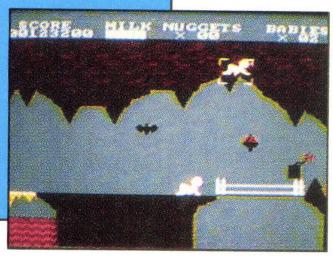
Matt Sakey of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, has a great tip for defeating Neifirst. Without Nei, the battle with Neifirst in the Dungeon of the Climatrol borders on impossible. But if you follow these simple assembly instructions, you can revive Nei to help continue in the fight. If you have gone to the Climatrol before going to Piata, you are either very lucky or very skilled. Before leaving Paseo, take Shir to the tool shop and have her swipe some Moon Dew. Dump Shir and prepare your Climatrol party (Rolf, Rudo, Anna and Nei), giving the Moon Dew to Rolf. When Neifirst kills Nei (as she undoubtedly will), restore her with the Moon Dew. Neifirst, controlled by the computer, will think Nei is dead and will not attack her. If you have a fourth character, you can kill Neifirst easily.

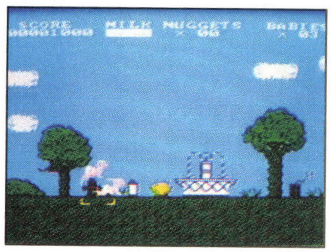
Baby Boomer

(Color Dreams for the NES)

R. Stewart, of Cleveland, Ohio, wrote in to tell us the location of extra men hidden in this game. In Level 1 shoot the fire hydrant ten times; in Level 2 shoot the tall, thin tombstone; in Level 4 shoot the stalactite over the bridge; and in Level 6 shoot the torch.













CYBERCORE

(NEC for the TG-16)

Normally, you get only three continues in this shooter, but Mark Antonio of Hercules, California, has come up with a way to get unlimited continues. When "Game Over" appears on the screen, press and hold the I, II and **SELECT** buttons, then press **RUN**. Nice find, Mark.

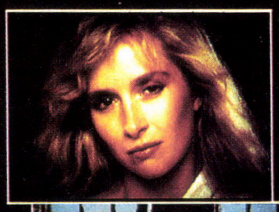
During the title screen press and hold L, then press **SELECT**, and a password prompt will appear on the screen. To become invincible, input MIKARIN, or for a hard setting, input YANDI. Once you have entered the code, press the I button then **RUN** to start play.

Dig Dug 77

(Bandai for the NES)

Here's a stage select sent in by Cam Newell, of Spokane, Washington. When the title screen stops, press A, **SELECT** and **START** at the same time. Once the stage select is on the screen, press U and D to choose a stage.

CRIME WAVE











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256 COLOR
VGA SCREENS

Real Sound™

A powerful crime syndicate has taken over large areas of our major cities turning them into vast criminal wastelands.

Arson, extortion, drug distribution, murder and now...terrorist abduction! You have just learned that they have taken the U.S. President's daughter and are holding her and our country hostage.

YOU'VE HAD A GUT-FULL! . . . **YOUR PURPOSE:** To wipe out this criminal organization and rescue the president's daughter. Even with the most sophisticated Assault Technology available, it won't be easy. You are the only one that can save the country from this sinister infestation . . .

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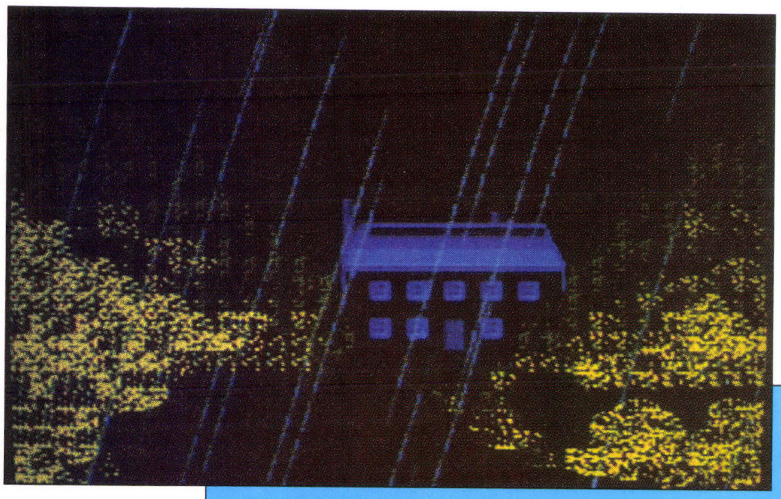
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CONFLICT

(Vic Tokai for the NES)

Stanley Orlen, of Hewlett, New York, sent in a code that will reveal the final battle scene. Type in HEXASOURYOKUSEN. Thanks, Stanley.



Splatterhouse

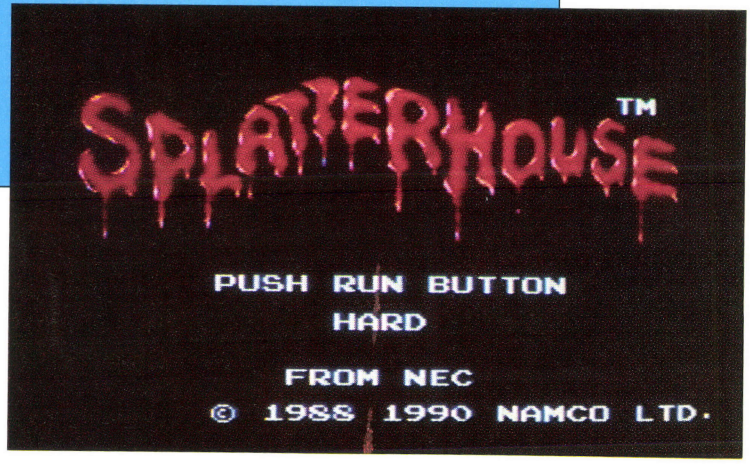
(NEC for the TG-16)



To get a stage select, when the house and lightning are on the screen, press the **SELECT** button three times, then press and hold L and press **RUN**. Once in the stage select, if you press the **SELECT** button you'll bring up a sound test.

If you find *Splatterhouse* too easy, then here's a way to change the difficulty. Simply hold the **SELECT** button down during the title screen, and after a few seconds the word "HARD" will appear.

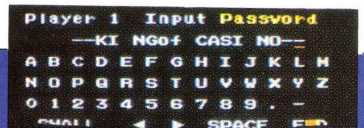






KING OF CASINO

(NEC for the TG-16)



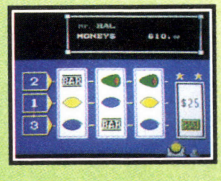
You can play a hidden game by entering – –KI NGof CASI NO– – You'll enter the championship round of a five-player playoff to see who can win the most casinos.

VEGAS DREAM

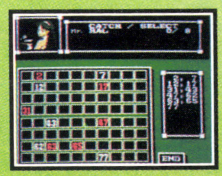
IS HERE!











Bring the Strip to your neighborhood—and the casino of your choice home to your living room. Set off with your friends to that magical oasis where dreams come true, and fortunes are made and lost. Combining four of the most popular casino games into one exciting package, VEGAS DREAM lets up to four players compete in the Hal Palace Hotel casino. Side bets, sub-plots and a cast of fascinating characters assure non-stop action. Try your hand at Blackjack or Roulette, spin the Slot Machines in denominations from $1 to $100, then take a little break in the action and play a few games of Keno. Loan money back and forth, change to a different game at any time, or save your bankroll to use next time. Take a chance on VEGAS DREAM—odds are you're going to love it.

Available April, 1990.







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The Funatic Specialists™

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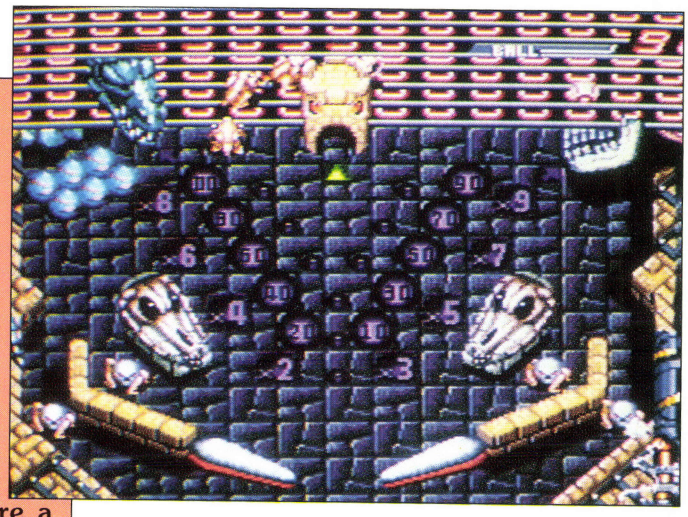
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Devil's Crush

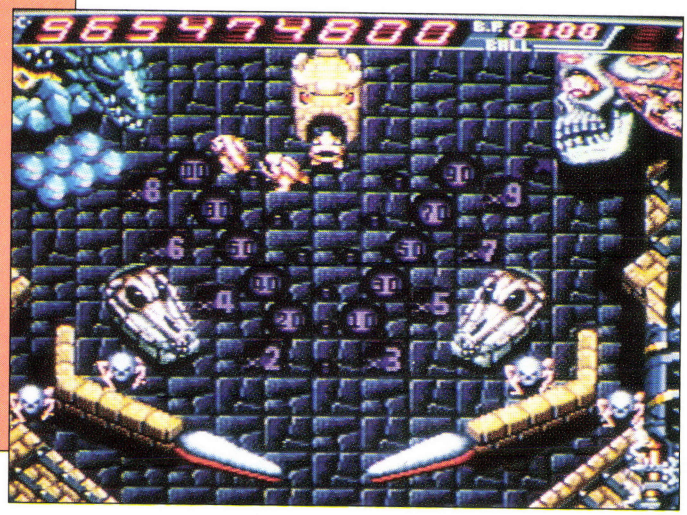
(NEC for the TG-16)

Here are some fun codes you can use when playing this great pinball game.

Type in DEBDEDEBDD and as soon as you score a point, you will have a score of 999,999,990 points, the screen will explode and you'll see the game's ending.

Type in SOUNDAAAAN to start off with 965,474,800 points and 107 balls!

Do you like the music of *Devil's Crush*? If so, here's a sound test for you. Press **START** to pause and **SELECT** to view the high-score table. Then press U, D, L, R and Button I on the controller. (It actually doesn't matter what order you press the directions, as long as you press all four.) The sound test will appear in the first slot.

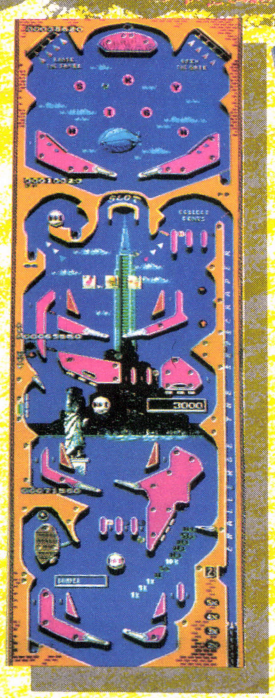






COMIN' AT YA!

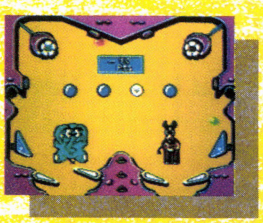






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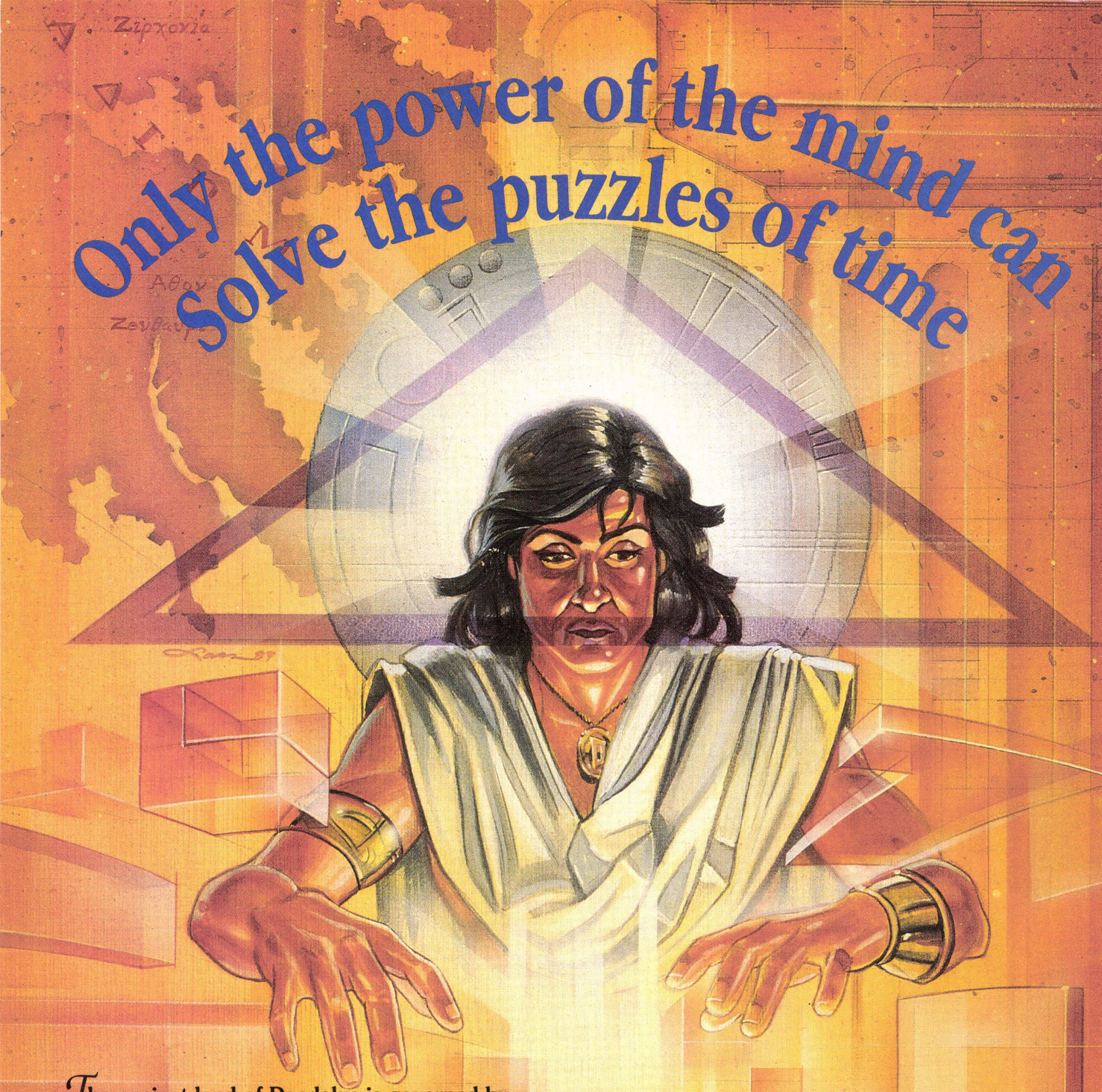
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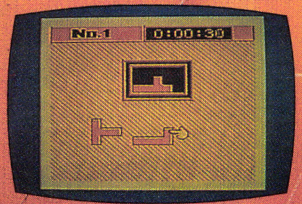
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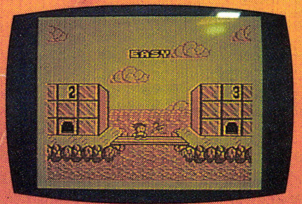
Only the power of the mind can Solve the puzzles of time



The ancient land of Daedalus is governed by symmetry and time. It is a land, where your progress will be severely tested by the challenge of myriad shapes and blocks. It will take the art of Daedalus and the power of your mind to solve the confounding riddles of the blocks. To master Daedalian Opus™ is to achieve the art of victory.

Daedalian Opus™ (dĭ-dā´lē•ən ō´pəs)





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- **400 prizes awarded each month!**
- **Five winners fly to Los Angeles!**
- **Winners compete in "Daedalian Opus™" Tournament!**





SWEEPSTAKES

Each month, beginning July 15th, 1990, a drawing will determine 400 winners who will receive prizes including a Daedalian Opus™ jacket. The last drawing for the final 400 winners will occur on November 15th, 1990.

After the November winners have been drawn, all entries received from July through November will go into a new drawing for the Daedalian Opus™ tournament.

TOURNAMENT

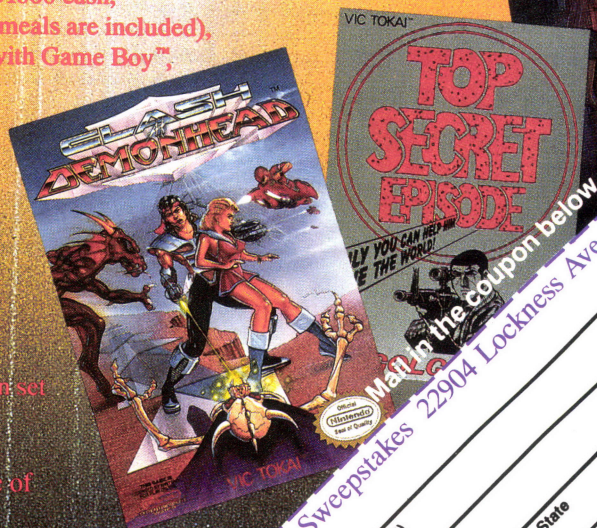
Five entries will be drawn for the tournament. Each of these five winners will be awarded $1000 cash, a trip for two to Los Angeles (hotel accommodations and meals are included), two tickets to Disneyland, a Light Boy accessory for use with Game Boy™, and a chance to compete against each other in the Daedalian Opus™ tournament at a CAPTRON World of Nintendo center.



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The champion of the Daedalian Opus™ Tournament will win the following prizes:

- A 25 inch color television set
- A Nintendo Action Set®
- A Mountain bicycle
- The entire Vic Tokai line of NES® game paks



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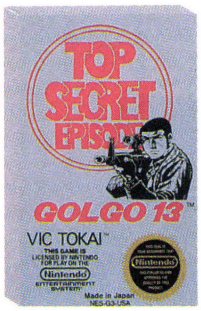
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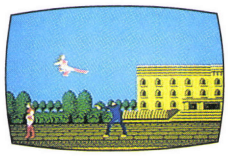
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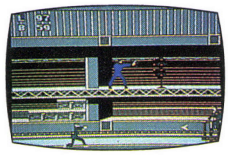
VIC TOKAI Revue!

Golgo 13™

Air wolves and iron tanks? Hey, this dude eats heavy metal for breakfast. The man likes to pack a custom M-16, but his karate kicks to the chops are just as deadly. He's anybody's agent if the price is right; and he's everybody's worst nightmare. **Golgo 13™** is the secret code for action. Air combat anyone? **Golgo 13™** takes you right up the tailpipes of bellowing bombers, right through the little choppers, and right around screaming interceptors. Whether it's crunching karate combat, tense underwater tank warfare, or the sizzling laser fights in the best mazes in video, **Golgo 13™** means action. In fact, there's so much action that you'll probably wear down the B-button.



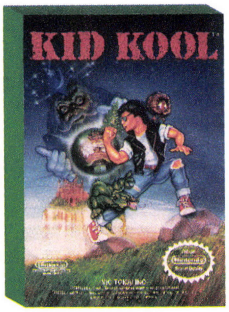


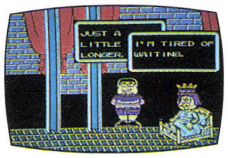


Kid Kool™

In a realm that might have been, in a time that could have been long ago, or just tomorrow, a good king lies dying. The enemies of the north are massing for an attack on his kingdom.

The good king's sorceror has been searching for magic and out of desperation pulls a rockin' rebel from the eighties back in time. **Kid Kool™** is sent on a quest to help retrieve the seven wonder herbs, the only hope to save the king.

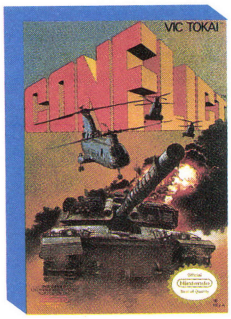










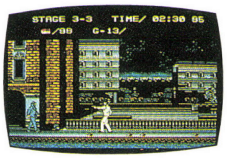


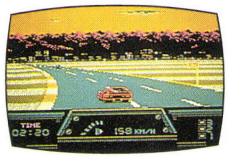
Conflict™

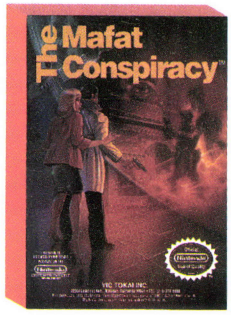
At the break of dawn, the eerie sounds of heavily-laden tanks pierce the morning calm. The metallic reflection in the distance only proves that the sun is bright, but who is it?

Are these tanks the armored support you called for, or has the red machine broken through? There is little time to react. Should you wait till your men are in range, or should you attack them now?

As Commander-in Chief, you've got no time to waste.







The Mafat Conspiracy™

A "StarWars" satellite has been snatched out of earth orbit, the inventor of satellite capture technology has disappeared, the C.I.A. and the K.G.B. are blaming each other, and the world edges toward nuclear oblivion.

Golgo 13 is back just in time. **The Mafat Conspiracy™** is a phantasmagora of action and interaction. Your eyeballs will stretch from their sockets as you speed through Europe in Golgo's Ferrari. Your bones will rattle as you leap across the cars on the Orient Express. And if you think you've seen bad dudes, wait till you feel the power of Duke Togo's wicked karate kick.

The Mafat Conspiracy™ is for those who demand the very best in video games. See it at World of Nintendo, and we'll prove it to you!

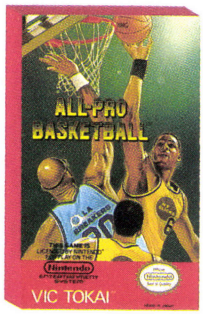
All-Pro Basketball™

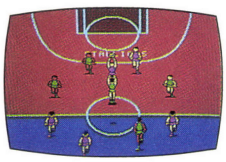
Bored with simple-minded one-on-one basketball? Disappointed that only three men on your team can dribble down court? In a foul mood because the guy who made the basketball game you bought seems to be using hockey rules?

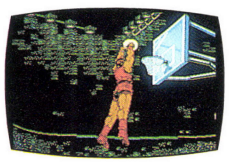
If you're a die-hard gym rat who can play the game, and expect your competition to be the same way, then it's time to play ball because **All-Pro Basketball™** has arrived.

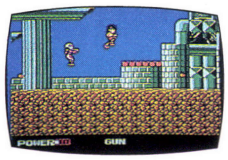
All-Pro is true all-court Five-On-Five basketball complete with long-range jumpers, in-your-face stuffs, passes, steals, rebounds, fouls, and even a half-time show.

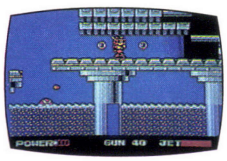
If you're new to basketball, buy the other games. But if you're a real basketball junkie, leave that weak stuff on your home court, and let's get down to the pro game.

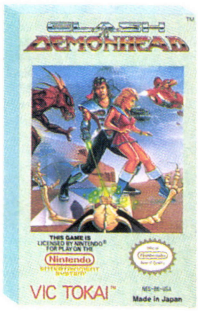












Clash at Demonhead™

Professor Plum and his designs for the dreaded, death-dealing doomsday device, Dead End, are in the clutches of the diabolical Lawbreakers–a sinister society dedicated to the destruction of mankind. It's only a matter of time before the Dead End Device is assembled and the final countdown to global Armageddon begins.

As Sgt. Billy "Big Bang" Blitz–the youngest and gutsiest commando of the Special Assault Brigade for Real Emergencies (S.A.B.R.E)–your mission is to foil the Lawbreakers' insidious plot. To accomplish your mission, you must find the shortest route to the summit of Demonhead Mountain, where the poor professor is being held prisoner. Rescue the professor, and you save the world from total destruction. But if you should fail. . .

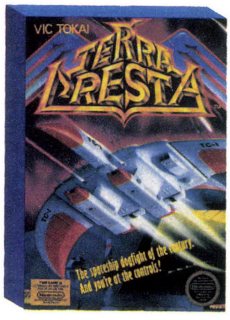
Terra Cresta™

Bored with action on earth? Sick of hohumming it around the neighborhood? Need some excitement in your life?

Take off into space with **Terra Cresta™**. You'll be hurled in to space and thrown into a fight with the evil forces of darkness. Only you can break through the enemy's treachery and beat Mandora, the Supreme Commander of the evil that awaits.

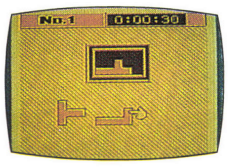


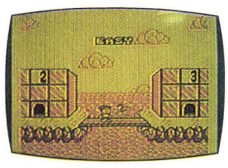




GAME BOY GAME BOY GAME BOY GAME BOY GAME BOY GAME BOY GAME BOY







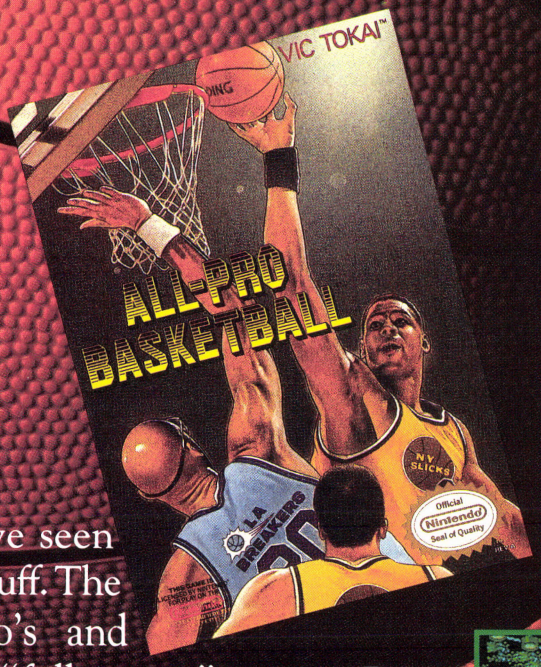
Daedalian Opus™

The ancient land of Daedalus is governed by symmetry and time. It is a land, where your progress will be severely tested by the challenge of myriad shapes and blocks. It will take the art of Daedalus and the power of your mind to solve the confounding riddles of the blocks. To be beaten is ordinary, to achieve victory is an art.

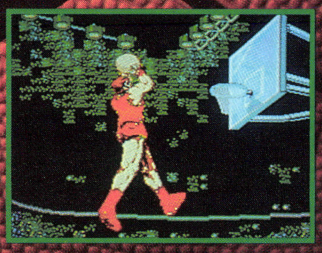
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Golgo 13™, Conflict™, Kid Kool™, The Mafat Conspiracy™, All-Pro Basketball™, Clash at Demonhead™ and Terra Cresta™ are trademarks of VIC TOKAI INC.

VIC TOKAI, INC.
22904 LOCKNESS AVE.
TORRANCE, CA 90501

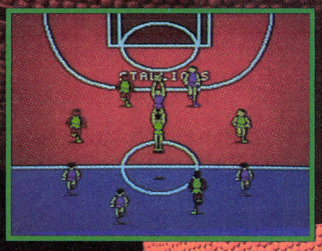
DON'T GET FAKED OUT OF THE GYM.



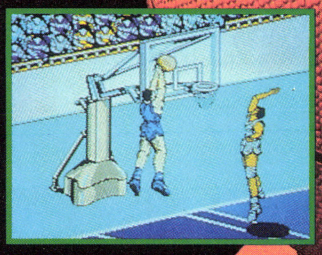
You've seen the weak stuff. The two-on-two's and the bogus "full- court" games. But you're a die-hard gym rat who can play the game and expect a lot more than what they've got. Now, you're going to get it!



All-Pro Basketball gives you true all-court, five-on-five pro ball, tournament mode, 1 or 2 player control, player substitutions for tiring starters, slam dunks, blocked shots, fouls, cheerleaders, and a half time show!



Now leave that weak stuff behind , and get down to the pro game.



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CIRCLE #141 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

YOU CAN'T STAY IN THE DARK FOREVER...



LightBoy,™ there's no better way to see the light.



LightBoy™ is a unique accessory designed to be used with **Game Boy**®. It is a lightweight, compact instrument which unfolds to fit directly onto **Game Boy**®, allowing you to view the screen with light through a magnifying glass. As an added bonus, Vic Tokai is including a shoulder/waist carrying case with the purchase of a **LightBoy**™. This case can house both the **LightBoy**™ and the **Game Boy**® together. It also has compartments which hold up to four **Game Boy**® game paks.



LightBoy™ for use with NINTENDO® Game Boy®

VIC TOKAI INC.
22904 Lockness Ave., Torrance, California 90501
TEL: (213) 326-8880

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CIRCLE #143 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

VIDEO COMP

A·D·D·R·E·S

Every time you turn around, there's another company that's sprung up to create video games or accessories for existing machines. It gets nearly impossible to track the activity, to keep the new players from the old veterans.

Well, fret no more. VG&CE has put together a comprehensive list of all the companies involved in videogame endeavors—at least all that we are aware of! Each company has a symbol next to it that indicates the system (or in some cases, systems) that group develops for. Here's the key to those symbols:

A/B

N Absolute Entertainment
251 Rock Road, P.O. Box 116
Glen Rock, NJ 07452
(201) 652-1227

N Acclaim Entertainment
71 Audrey Ave.
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 922-2400
Game Counselor Line: (516) 624-9300

N Accolade
S
T
550 S. Winchester Blvd., Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 985-1700
Game Counselor Line: (408) 296-8400

N Activision
S
3885 Bohannon Drive
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(415) 329-0500
Game Counselor Line: (415) 329-7699

N Advanced Gravis Computer Technology
S
T
7033 Antrim Ave.
Burnaby, B.C., Canada V5J 4M5
(604) 434-7274
Tech Line: (604) 434-1807

N American Sammy
2421-205th St., Suite D-104
Torrance, CA 90501
(213) 320-7167

N American Softworks
228 East 45th St., 4th Floor
New York, NY 10017
(212) 972-6262

N American Technos
4805 S.W. Griffith Drive
Beaverton, OR 97005
(503) 643-9768

N Arcadia Systems
18001 Cowan, Suites A & B
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 833-8710

N Asmik Corporation
50 North La Cienega Boulevard
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
(213) 854-9774

N Asuka Technologies
17145 Von Karman Ave., Suite 110
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 757-1212

L Atari Corp.
1196 Borregas Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3427
(408) 745-2000
Game Counseling Line: (408) 745-2004

N Bandai America
12851 East 166th St.
Cerritos, CA 90701
(213) 926-0947

N BDL Enterprises
6100 Green Valley Drive, Suite 220
Bloomington, MN 55438
(612) 832-0167

N Beeshu
S
T
930 Carter Road
Suite 236
Winter Garden, FL 34787
(407) 877-2100

N Bondwell Industrial
S
T
47485 Seabridge Drive
Fremont, CA 94538
(415) 490-4300

N Brøderbund Software
17 Paul Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903
(415) 492-3200

N Bullet-Proof Software
8337 154th Ave., N.E.
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 861-9200

C/D

N Capcom USA
3303 Scott Blvd.
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-0400
Game Counselor Line: (408) 727-1665

T Cinemaware
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Westlake Village, CA 91362
(805) 495-6515

N Color Dreams
S
2700 East Imperial Highway, Bldg. A
Brea, CA 92621
(714) 579-0693

N CSG Imagesoft
9200 Sunset Blvd., Suite 820
Los Angeles, CA 90069
(213) 858-3777

N Culture Brain USA
15315 N.E. 90th St.
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 882-2339

N Data East USA
1850 Little Orchard St.
San Jose, CA 95125
(408) 286-7080
Game Counselor Line: (408) 286-7080, Ext. 298

S DreamWorks
150 Woodbridge Plaza, Suite 10201
Wayzata Blvd.
Minnetonka, MN 55343
(612) 591-1494

E/F

N Electro Brain
573 East 300, South
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
(801) 531-1867
Game Counselor Line: (800) 232-0324

N Electronic Arts
S
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171
Game Counselor Line: (415) 572-9560

-GAME ANIES

·S B·O·O·K

N Nintendo Entertainment System and/or Game Boy
S Sega Genesis and/or Master System
L Atari Lynx
T TurboGrafx-16

This list is current as of mid-July, though it's obviously subject to change due to the volatile nature of the industry. Where possible, we've listed a game-counselor phone number, but in many cases, game counselors are available from the company's main number.

N Enix America
4030 148th Ave., N.E., NG-1
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 885-9611/(206) 637-0839

N FCI
150 East 52nd St., 34th Floor
New York, NY 10022
(212) 753-8100

G/H

N GameTek
2999 N.E. 191st St., Suite 800
N. Miami Beach, FL 33180
(305) 935-3995

N HAL America
7873 S.W. Cirrus Drive, 25-F
Beaverton, OR 97005
(503) 644-3009
Game Counselor Line: (503) 644-4117

N Hi-Tech Expressions
584 Broadway, Suite 509
New York, NY 10012
(212) 941-1224
Game Counselor Line: (212) 941-9703
(212) 941-9704

N Hot-B USA
1255 Post St., Suite 1005
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 567-9501

N Hudson Soft USA
400 Oyster Point Blvd., Suite 515
S. San Francisco, CA 94080
(415) 871-8895
Game Counselor Line: (415) 495-4468

I/J/K

T IGS
80 South Lake Ave., Suite 526
Pasadena, CA 91101
(818) 440-0626

N INTV
S 3541 B Lomita Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90505
(213) 539-0100

N IREM America
8335 154th Ave., N.E.
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 882-1093

N Jaleco USA
310 Era Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062
(708) 480-1811

N JVC Musical Industries
6363 Sunset Blvd., Suite 500
Hollywood, CA 90028
(213) 466-5927

S Kaneko Seisakusho
2421 205th St., Suite D-104
Torrance, CA 90501
(213) 320-7167

N Kemco/Seika
20000 Mariner Ave., Suite 100
Torrance, CA 90503
(213) 373-0404
Game Counselor Line: (213) 373-8127

N Koei
One Bay Plaza, Suite 540
1350 Bayshore Highway
Burlingame, CA 94010
(415) 348-0200
Game Counselor Line: (415) 328-0400

N Konami
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510
(708) 215-5100
Game Counselor Line: (708) 215-5111

S Kyugo Trading Company
1616 Gilboa
Zion, IL 60099
(708) 872-2021

L/M

N LJN
71 Audrey Ave.
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 922-2428
Game Counselor Line: (516) 624-9300

N Matchbox Toys (USA)
6100 Green Valley Drive, Suite 220
Bloomington, MN 55438
(612) 832-0167
Game Counselor Line: (612) 831-5822

N Mattel
5150 Rosecrans Ave.
Hawthorne, CA 90250
(213) 978-5150

N Meldac of America
1801 Century Park East, Suite 2210
Los Angeles, CA 90067
(213) 286-7040
Game Counselor Line: (213) 286-7043

S Micronet USA
2401 Keanu St., Suite 1
Honolulu, HI
(808) 735-0050

N Milton Bradley
443 Shaker Road
East Longmeadow, MA 01028
(413) 525-6411
Game Counselor Line: (413) 525-3545

N Mindscape
19808 Nordhoff Place
Chatsworth, CA 91311
(818) 885-9000

N/O

S Namco America
453 Ravendale Drive, Suite A
Mountain View, CA 94043
(415) 965-7300

N Natsume
1234 A Howard Ave.
Burlingame, CA 94010
(415) 342-1712
Game Counselor Line: (415) 342-9231

T NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191
(708) 860-9500
Game Counselor Line: (708) 860-3648

N Nexoft
11105 Dana Circle
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 373-2072
Game Counselor Line: (714) 373-2054

N Nintendo of America
4820 150th Ave., N.E.
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 882-2040
Game Counselor Line: (206) 885-7529

N NTVIC
50 Rockefeller Plaza, Suite 940
New York, NY 10020
(212) 489-8390

S Nuvision Entertainment
10 Westminster Road
Andover, MA 01810
(508) 475-1576

P/Q

N Parker Brothers
50 Dunham Road
Beverly, MA 01915
(508) 927-7600
Game Counselor Line: (508) 921-3555

R/S

T Radiance Software
325 E. Hillcrest Drive, Suite 209
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
(818) 763-7410/(818) 506-7753

S Razor Soft
7416 N. Broadway, Suite A
Oklahoma City, OK 73116
(405) 843-3505

S Renovation Products
987 University Ave., Suite 10
Los Gatos, CA 95030
(408) 395-8375

N Romstar
22857 Lockness Ave.
Torrance, CA 90501
(213) 539-5283

S Sage's Creation
1255 Post St., Suite 1040
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 292-6201
Game Counselor Line: (415) 292-6210

S Sega of America
573 Forbes Blvd.
South San Francisco, CA 94080
(800) USA-SEGA
Game Counselor Line: (415) 871-GAME

S Seismic
3375 Scott Blvd., Suite 100
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-3682
Game Counselor Line: (408) 727-9883

N Seta USA
105 East Reno Ave., Suite 22
Las Vegas, NV 89119
(702) 795-7996

N Sharp Electronics
Sharp Plaza
Mahwah, NJ 07430
(201) 529-8200

N Software Toolworks
19808 Nordhoff Place
Chatsworth, CA 91311
(818) 885-9000

N SNK
246 Sobrante Way
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
(408) 736-8844
Game Counselor Line: (800) PLAY-SNK

N Sofel
1333 Ocean Ave., Suite B
Santa Monica, CA 90401
(213) 458-3916
Game Counselor Line: (213) 458-3957

N Square Soft
8347-154th Ave., N.E.
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 861-0101

N Suncom
6400 W. Gross Point Road
Niles, IL 60648
(708) 647-4040

N Sunsoft
11165 Knott Ave., Suites A and B
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 891-4500

T/U

N Taito Software
267 West Esplanade
North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7M 1A5
(604) 984-3344

N Taxan USA
161 Nortech Parkway
San Jose, CA 95134
(408) 946-3400
Game Counselor Line: (408) 946-3400, ext. 253

S Technosoft
1255 Post St., Suite 1040
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 441-1871
Game Counselor Line: (415) 567-2589

N Tecmo
Victoria Business Park
18005 S. Adria Maru Lane
Carson, CA 90746
(213) 329-5880

N Tengen
1623 Buckeye Drive
S Milpitas, CA 95035
T (408) 435-2650
Game Counselor Line: (408) 433-3999

N T.H.Q.
5000 N. Parkway Calabasas, Suite 305
Calabasas, CA 91302
(818) 591-1310

N Toho
2049 Century Park East, Suite 490
Los Angeles, CA 90067
(213) 277-1081
Game Counselor Line: (708) 916-7665

N Tradewest
2400 S. Highway 75
Corsicana, TX 75110
(214) 874-2683

S Treco USA
2421 205th St., Suite D-104
Torrance, CA 90501
(213) 320-7167

N Ultra Software
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
(708) 215-5100
Game Counselor Line: (708) 215-5111

V/W

N Vic Tokai
22904 Lockness Ave.
Torrance, CA 90501
(213) 326-8880

S Video System
17800 S. Main St., Suite 121
Gardena, CA 90248
(213) 217-0897

X/Y/Z

"THE REALISM IS UNCANNY"

—International Snowboarding Magazine



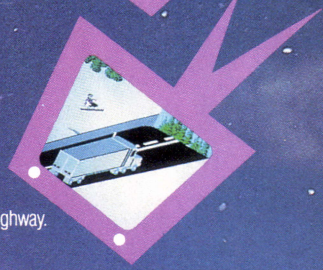
If you want snowboarding action to the bone, "HEAVY SHREDDIN'"™, the outrageous new video game by Parker Brothers, is not only the first snowboarding game for your Nintendo Entertainment System®, it's also the closest you'll come to the real thing without getting a face full of powder. Jam down the downhill and try to work your way through the other levels (half-pipe, slalom, mogul and survival). Just try. Sure, it's a sweat, but you'll probably be using mule kicks, toe grabs and 360 degree turns in no time, as you rocket down the slopes at over 50 miles per hour to go for the World Cup Trophy. Out of control? No way, dude. Just think fast and use a hand plant to get back on course. And speaking of the course, seriously realistic diagonal 3-D feel, dude! And grok on this: each game cartridge sports a special International Snowboarding Magazine offer! So, get ready to leap the chalet, beat the clock and generally powder out with the "HEAVY SHREDDIN'" game!



Cosmic Chasm Leap.



Do a mid-air 360 in the half-pipe.



Pull a gnarly jump over the highway.

"WOW, DUDE"
—Joey Z., Snowboarding Fiend

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

PARKER BROTHERS

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CIRCLE #143 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Ninja Gaiden II

PLAYER'S GUIDE, PART II

BY DONN NAUERT

A year has passed since the defeat of Jaquio, and now Ashtar, the dark lord who secretly controlled Jaquio, is on the move. The only one qualified enough to catch and defeat the villainous Ashtar is our hero, Ryu Hayabusa.

Last month we guided you through the first three stages of this video-game epic This month we'll take you through the final four as we see if Ryu has what it takes to defeat Ashtar.
Or, more important–do you have what it takes?

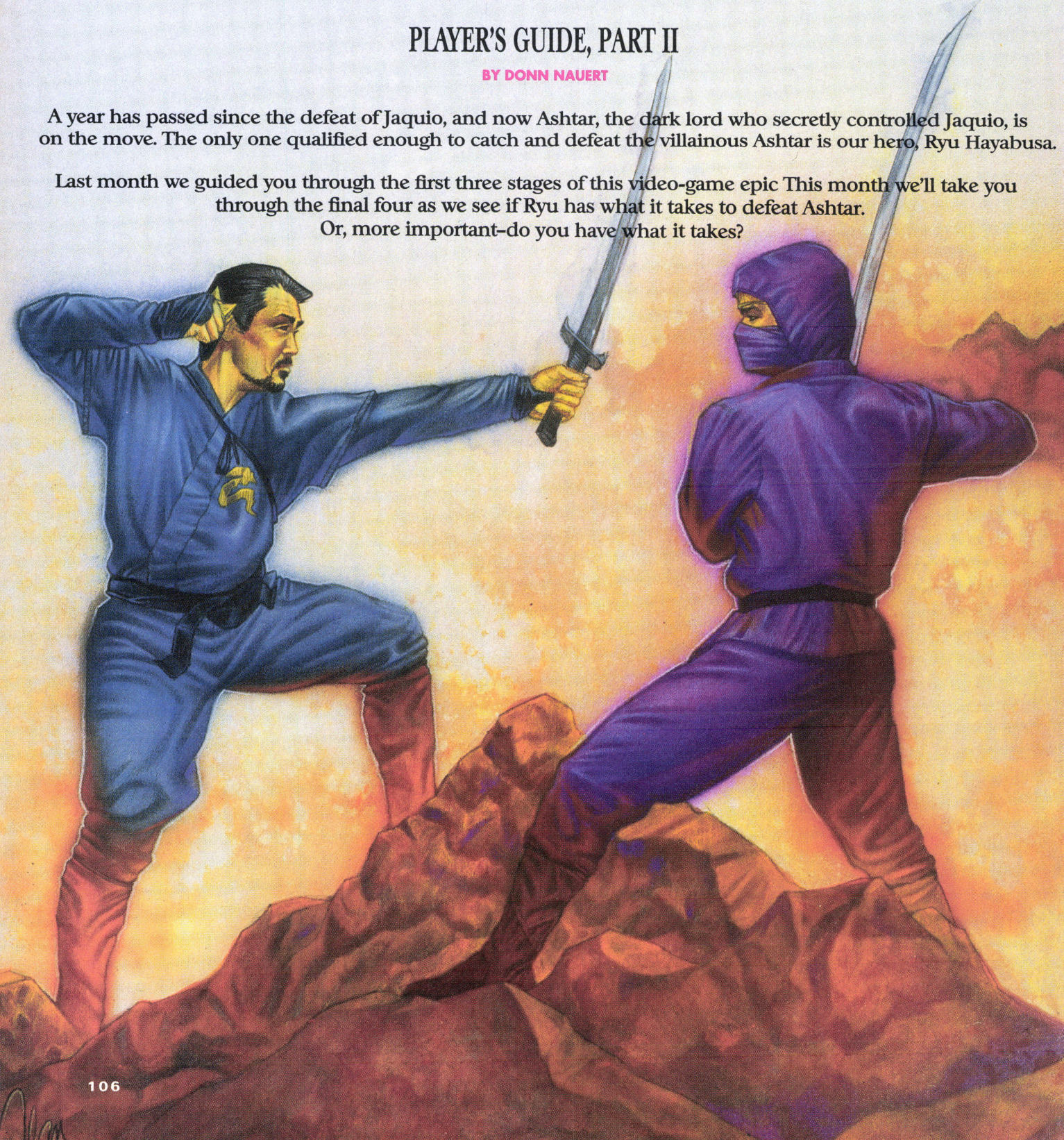




ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN HUNTER

GENERAL HINTS:

Learn to use the extra images you get from the splitting body item. They're great to use against flying enemies and those that sneak up behind you. They're especially useful when going against an end boss.

There are a lot of areas where you'll have to know how to use the swift kick-off jump; if you've misjudged the distance between two ledges or in any circumstance where you find yourself dangling from the side of a wall. To perform this leap, you must first climb to the top of the wall and jump away from it. Then quickly move the control pad in the opposite direction, in the direction of the wall, to safety. This is one of the more difficult techniques to learn, so you might want to spend a little time in Stage 1-1 to master the move.

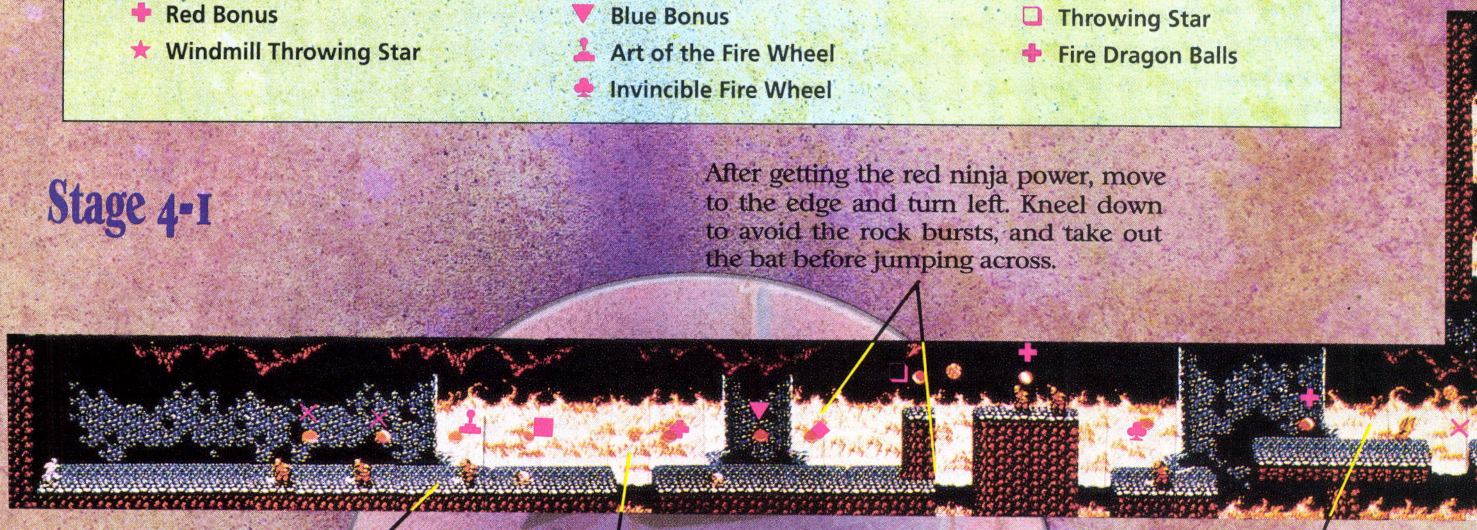
To make the windmill-throwing star more effective, after throwing it, avoid catching it as it comes back around. This will cause it to fly around the screen, eliminating any enemies it comes in contact with.

Try not to move backward. The enemies appear when Ryu passes certain points, so if you move backward, the same enemies will reappear. This makes getting through a stage more difficult.

LEGEND

- Blue Ninja Power
- Splitting Body
- Red Bonus
- Windmill Throwing Star
- Red Ninja Power
- Medicine
- Blue Bonus
- Art of the Fire Wheel
- Invincible Fire Wheel
- Scroll
- Extra Man
- Throwing Star
- Fire Dragon Balls

Stage 4-1



After getting the red ninja power, move to the edge and turn left. Kneel down to avoid the rock bursts, and take out the bat before jumping across.

Does anybody know what the thing with frog legs is?

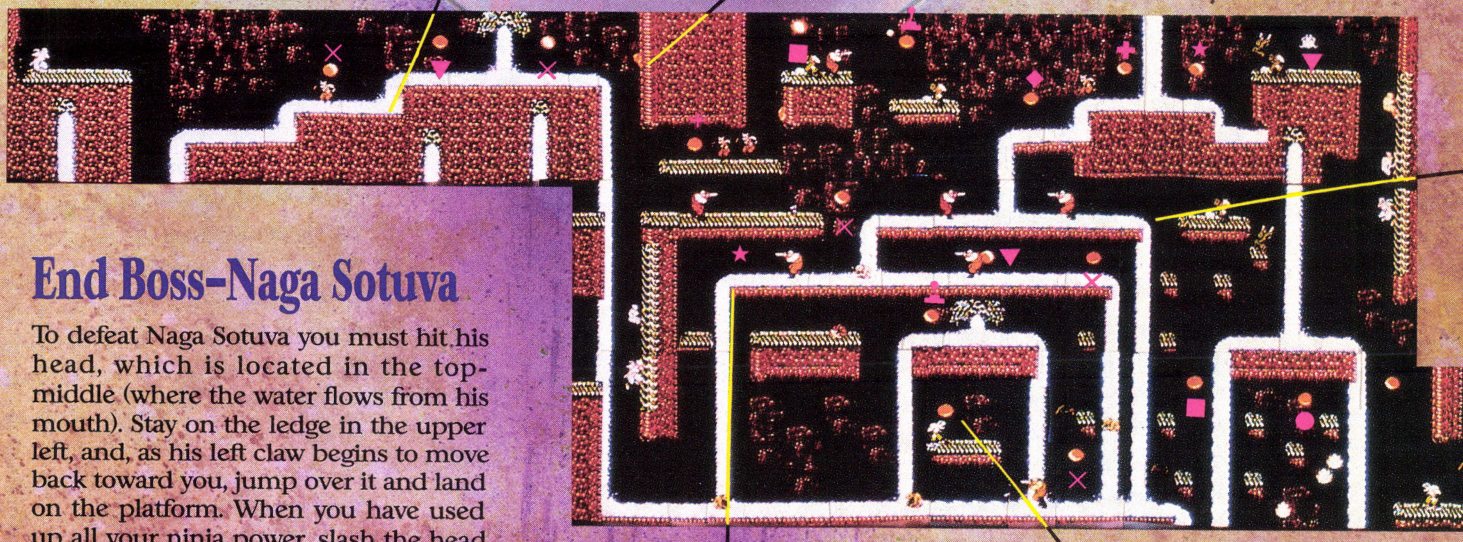
Bombs away! Watch out for exploding rocks.

Watch out for the big bat that tries to ambush you. After you take care of the bat, move to the right and duck to avoid the falling rocks. Once you kneel down, a small bat will appear.

Stage 4-2

Take your time going through this section. Pay attention to which direction the water is flowing as you go.

Shoot this enemy with any available weapon; it'll make attempting this jump easier.

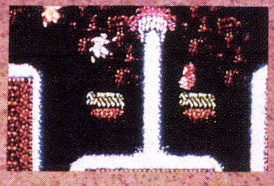


Let the knife-wielding enemy jump past you before you move up to the next level.

Once you get this extra man, go back up the ladder. When you come back down, you'll find that all the items have reappeared, allowing you to obtain as many men as you would like.

End Boss-Naga Sotuva

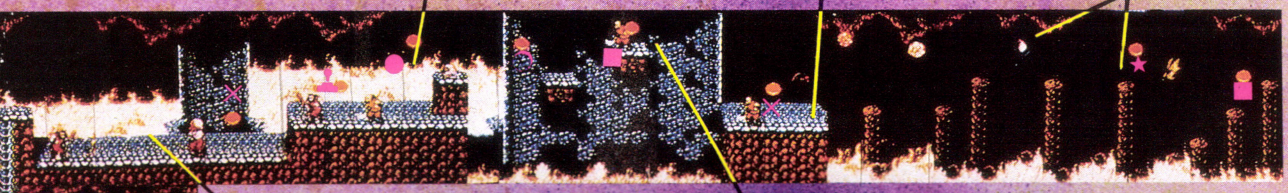
To defeat Naga Sotuva you must hit his head, which is located in the top-middle (where the water flows from his mouth). Stay on the ledge in the upper left, and, as his left claw begins to move back toward you, jump over it and land on the platform. When you have used up all your ninja power, slash the head with your sword. When his right claw starts toward you, jump back to the ledge above, and repeat the procedure until Nova Sotuva is defeated.



If the last area was too much for you, the medicine located here will help.

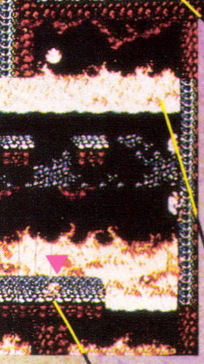
Again, get to the very edge and kneel to avoid the rocks, then jump.

This flame will appear once you reach the edge of this pillar. If you can get rid of the bat and quickly jump to the next pillar, the flame won't move fast enough to keep up.



Hop over the first rock, then move forward. Duck under the second rock, and swing your sword to get rid of the enemy here. As you approach the dragon-spirit crystal, an enemy will sneak up on you from behind. Yes, you can slash the rocks to destroy them.

Be sure to get the scroll found in the crystal to the left. Time your jump to this ledge so that you draw the flames toward you, then jump back to the first ledge, and engage in swordplay to defeat them. This way you can take your time jumping to the floor below.

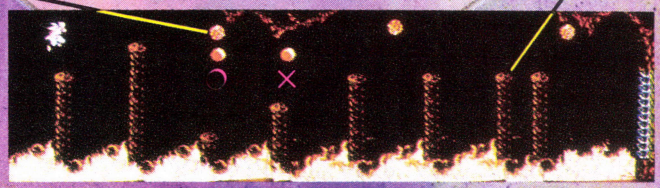


Use the invincible fire wheel to get through this section easily.

Jump to the ladder quickly, or the eyeball with legs will land on you.

Two scrolls on one stage. Can't beat that.

To get by the two rocks here, one little hop will do the trick.

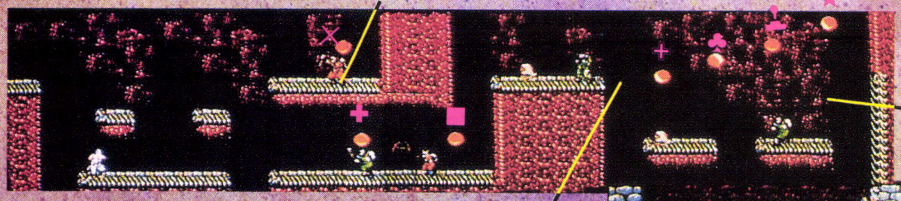


Wait for the enemies on the level above to run off the screen, then make your move.

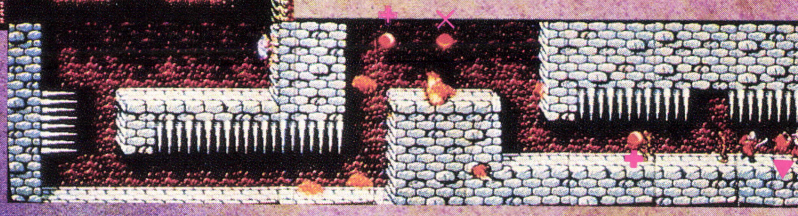


Be sure to get the windmill-throwing star. It's a good weapon to have when going against Naga Sotuva.

Be sure to get this red ninja power to replenish your power to the maximum.



Pick a weapon, any weapon.



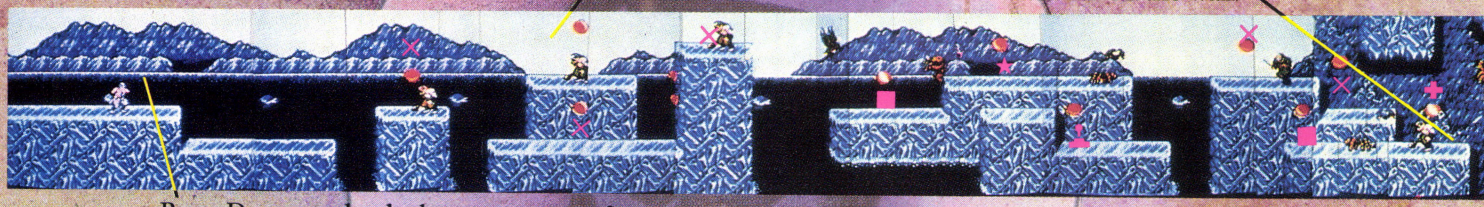
Stage 5-1

Climb down the wall on the left, and use your available item to destroy the eyeball, but be ready for a bat and a sword-toting enemy when you jump on the ledge.

Stage 5-2

With a short hop, you can keep yourself from sliding off the edge.

Once again you come across the giant spiders. Like before, simply move to the edge of the level, and the spider will fall off the wall.



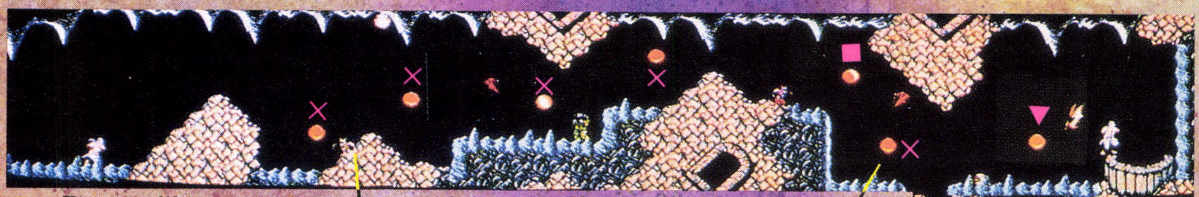
Brrr. Does anybody have a sweater? This ice is awfully cold.



Watch out for the ninja dude.

If you're quick enough, you can jump from ledge to ledge without missing an item or getting damaged by the knife-carrying guy that chases you. If not, do a small jump to get your footing, turn and slash.

Stage 6-1



Do you like surprises? In this stage the enemy likes to hide behind ruins.

No! Not another blue ninja power!



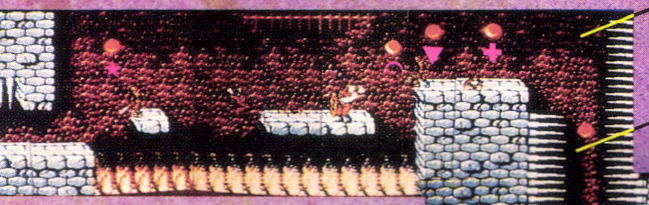
Hey, where'd he go?



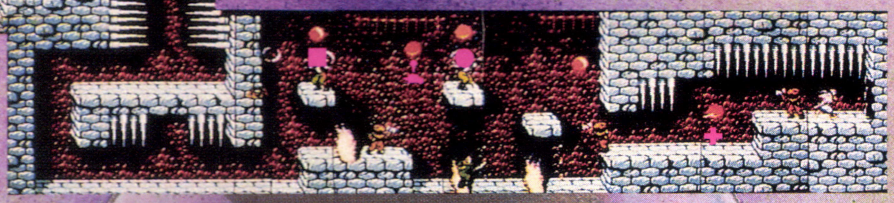
End Boss-Kelbeross

These are some of the bosses found in the original Ninja Gaiden, and they still have the same pattern. Use the same technique to defeat them: Stay close to the pillar on the right, and avoid them as they jump. Use your ninja power or sword for a quick victory.

Watch for the small bat that appears here. If you're not ready for it, it'll knock you off the side, and you'll miss the extra man.



Take care not to hit this dragon-spirit crystal with your ninja power items. If you hit the crystal too soon, you might not have time to get the medicine.



When you land on this platform, kneel down and hack when the bird gets near.



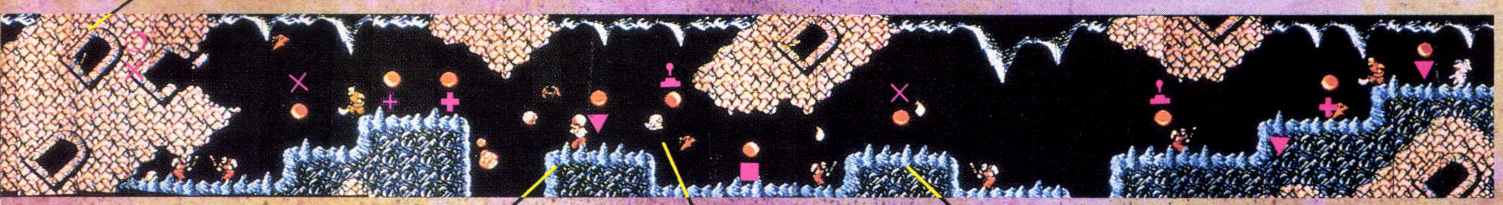
You'll need a running start to make this jump.

End Boss-Ashtar



If you have any ninja power-especially the art of the fire wheel-Ashtar can be relatively easy. But if you don't, try to stay just to the left or right of the pedestal in the center of the screen, moving left, then right. Ashtar's fireballs will repeatedly pass over you. Simply jump and use your sword until he is defeated.

Peek-a-boo, I see you.

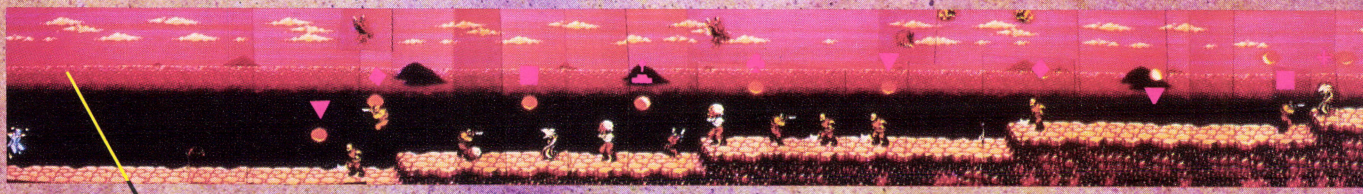


Have fire dragon balls, will travel.

Ahhh! It's raining hyperactive eyeballs.

They're trying the old double whammy! Two flames and two guys with clubs.

Stage 6-2



This may be the shortest stage in the game, but it certainly isn't the easiest. They'll throw everything they have at you in this one.

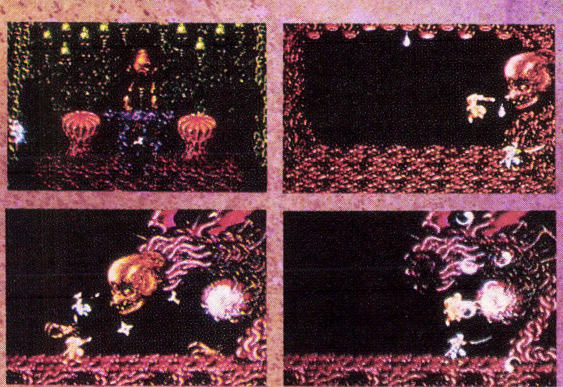
Final Boss-Jaquio

That's right! Video gaming's favorite bad boy is back, and he's tougher than ever. To defeat him you must have both split bodies, then move to the top of one of the pillars. Use all your available ninja power; as Jaquio shoots the fireballs at you, move off the pillar. Hack at Jaquio as many times as you can, then jump back onto the pillar, repeating the process until he's defeated.

The demon that is then created is fairly simple to defeat. If you have enough health left from the previous battle, jump so that your split bodies line up directly in front of the demon, with Ryu in the bottom-right. Then, just slash away as quickly as possible.

If you should die, you'll have to complete Stage 7-2 again. Of course, this time you can go against the demon with full ninja power. Again, line up the split bodies so that they are in front of the demon's face and fire away.

For the final boss, use your remaining ninja power to destroy the face. It should take about five shots to do this. After the head finishes exploding, fireballs will be thrown down on you. Since you can take five or more hits of the fireballs, concentrate more on the heart of the dragon rather than trying to avoid the raining flames. It will take 16 hits of the sword to defeat the heart, so use your split bodies wisely.



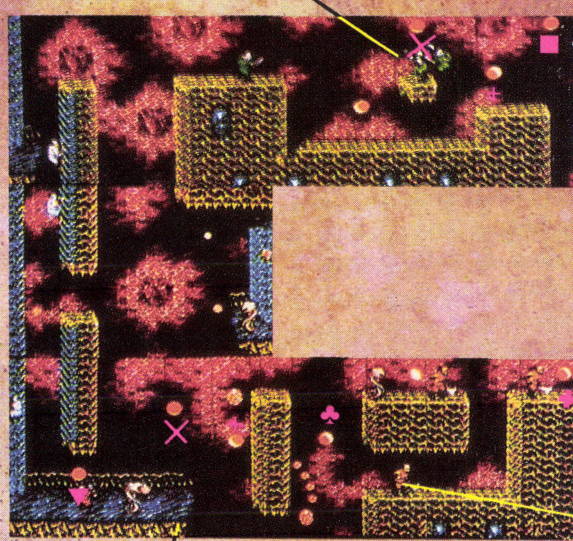
Stage 7-1



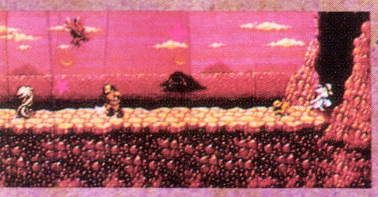
Is there an invisible wall here? This red guy can't seem to jump past it.

Stage 7-2

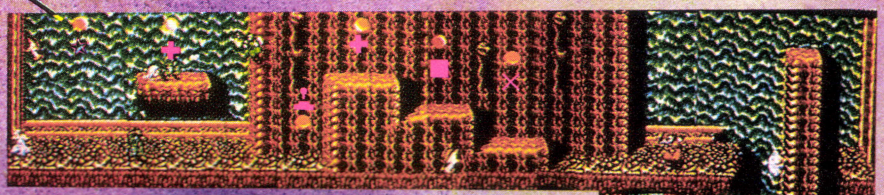
Your first priority is to get rid of the man on the platform.



Use the invincible fire wheel to make a safe jump.



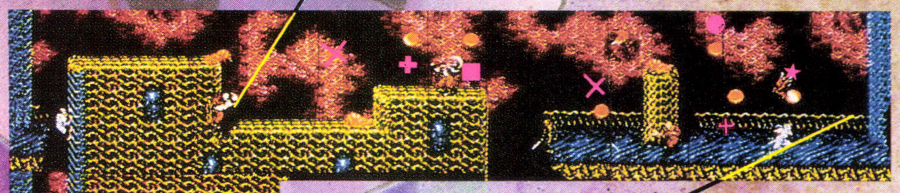
Grab the extra man before entering the last stage.



Take the pillar to the right to continue your quest.

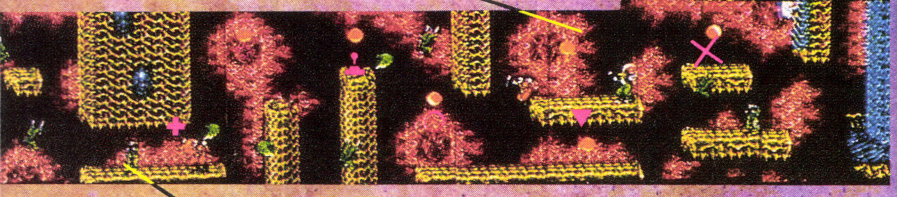


Get the man on the screen, then move back to the left. This will draw him closer to the wall, allowing you to make a safer jump.

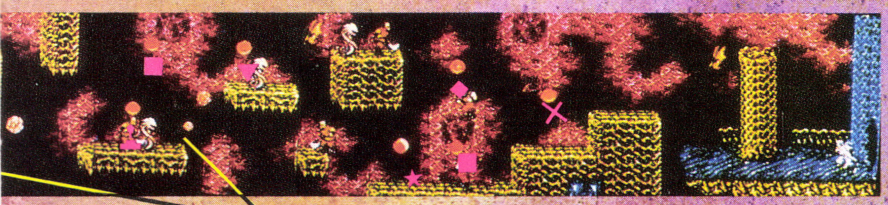


Now the real fun begins.

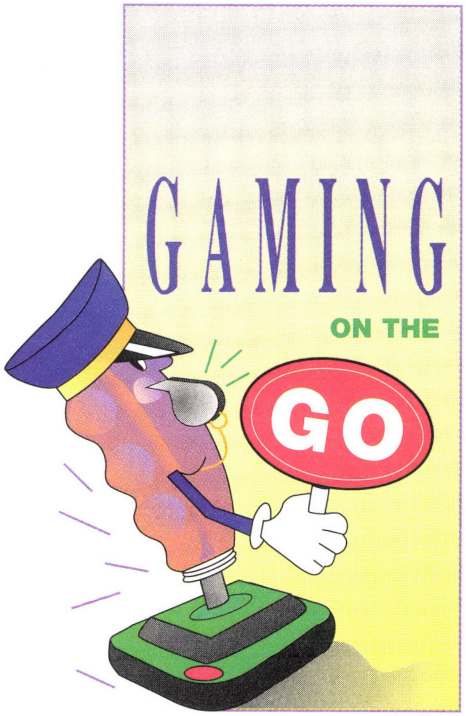
Jump from this pillar to get the extra man.



It's time to use a little fire dragon ball.



Jump from the bottom ledge, and get the invincible fire wheel



HOLIDAY HANDHELDS

by
MAURICE MOLYNEAUX

As the holiday season closes in on us with all the speed and subtlety of an air-to-air missile, it's time to give some thought to what games you'd like Santa, your parents, relatives, spouse or Hanukkah Harry to give you for being so good this year (ha!). This month I'll review a few of the newer games for the programmable, portable game machines. If you see one you can't live without, circle it with a bright red marker, and lay the open magazine out where some gullible...er, loving person can see it and get the hint.

Unfortunately, I haven't yet seen a handheld NES or the TurboExpress (TurboGrafx-16 portable), so if either of those mythic beasts has materialized and sits in your hot little hands...sorry. The only games I'll be discussing are for the Game Boy and the Lynx.

Pipe Dream

Bullet-Proof Software for the Game Boy

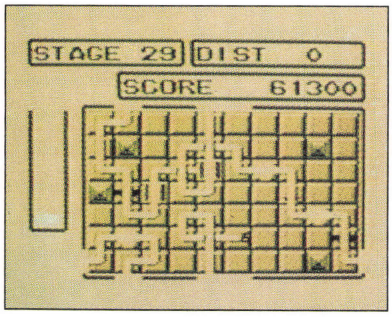
Wouldn't you just love to play a game where your task is to fit pipe segments together to make as long a pipeline as you can before some gooey fluid overtakes you and floods the basement? Does that sound exciting? No? Well, then, you obviously haven't played *Pipe Dream*. The original computer version, released by Lucasfilm Games, received many awards after its release, so if you had any doubts about this game, flush 'em.

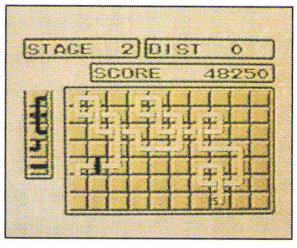
In *Pipe Dream* your job is to fit together pipe segments of varying types so that they form a continuous line away from a starting "spigot." You cannot rotate the pieces and must try to fit them together as they come. Further complicating matters, shortly after a round begins, viscous fluid called "flooz" starts flowing from the starting point. There is a meter showing the "distance" the flooz must travel before reaching the end of the pipeline, and if your pipeline isn't long enough to carry the flooz at least that distance, the game is over! The longer you can make your pipeline, the higher your score will be.

The danger, of course, is in placing parts willy-nilly and leaving an incomplete segment from which the flooz can escape. You have no control over what pipe piece you'll get next, so you're forced to work with what you've got, looking at the "pipe dispenser" on the screen. This bin of pieces shows the next five pieces you'll get, so you can try to predict where to place pieces in anticipation of what's coming next. When the flooz starts to close in on the end of your pipe, "danger" music starts to play, and if you haven't met the distance requirement, you'd best hurry up!

Pipe Dream supports the Game Boy's Video Link, allowing for two players (provided both have the game cartridge). In this mode, the first player to win three stages in a row wins the game. To further heat up the competition, every time a player makes a "loop" (with special criss-cross pipe segments), he or she causes the opponent's flooz to suddenly advance by four pipe segments!

Pipe Dream features several different pieces of background music, 36 levels to challenge you and animated sequences after every four stages—as well as a password. There's plenty of time to ask Santa for this one!





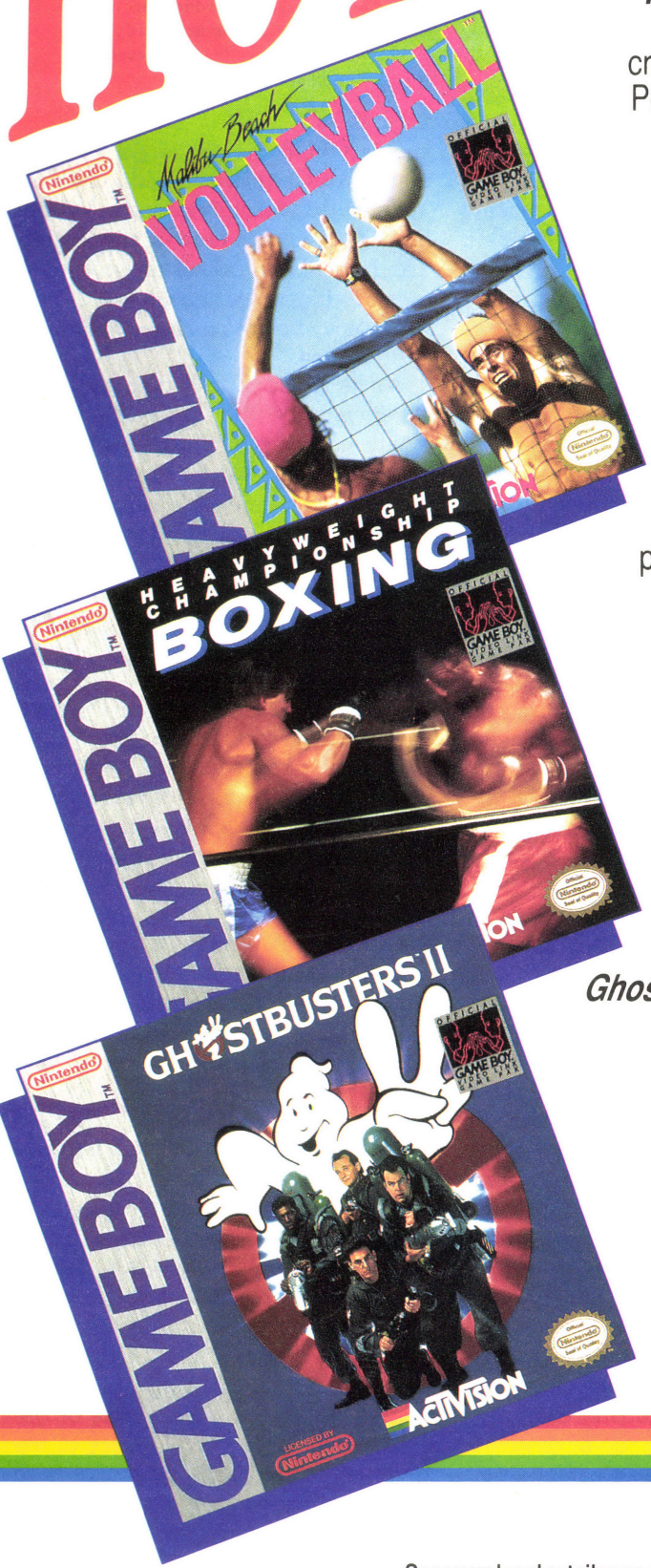
Gamers familiar with Lucasfilms' *Pipe Dream* will be thankful for the Game Boy version of the game, which allows not only portable plumbing for those on the go, but also two-player, head-to-head competition.

Klax

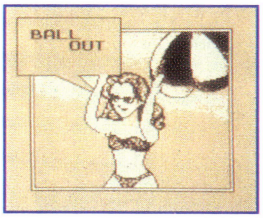
Atari for the Lynx

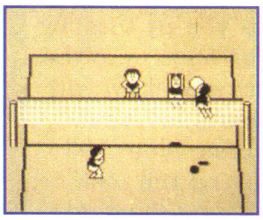
Klax is a remarkable conversion of the Atari Games coin-op of the same name. A hybrid action and mental puzzle game, *Klax* looks deceptively simple, but can be quite a challenge. You control a paddle that can move back and forth at the edge of a five-track conveyor belt, down which tumble square tiles of varying colors. Your task is to catch each tile as it reaches the end of the conveyor, and then deposit it into the "pit" below. The trouble is, the pit only holds 25 tiles, so the trick is to make a "Klax" so that the tiles will disappear. Making a Klax involves lining up three or more tiles of the same color so that they form a straight line: horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Therefore, the game is a lot more complicated than just catching tiles and dropping them. If you don't form a Klax, the pit will fill up and the game will end.

HOT GAME BOY ACTION!

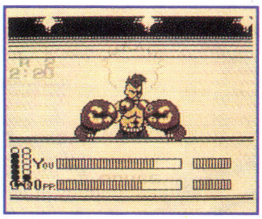


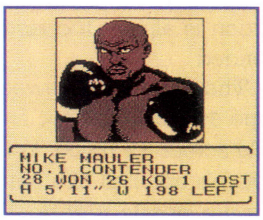
Malibu Beach Volleyball. Two-on-two sandblastin' volleyball, Malibu style. Set 'n spike against V-ball crews from 4 countries, each with different strengths. Power serves, "bulldozer" digs, and other cool shots. **1st and Only Game Boy Volleyball Game!**



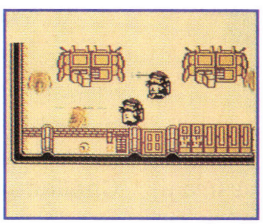


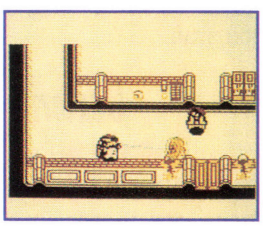
Heavyweight Championship Boxing. You've got hooks, jabs, uppercuts—plus a special knockout punch you select for each fight. Knockout, bash-'em boxing with 6 bad bruisers. 2 views of the action! **1st and Only Game Boy Boxing Game!**





Ghostbusters II. All the best scenes from the hit movie. Battle Vigo and his slimy forces in all of New York's favorite "haunts," from the subway to the Museum of Art. Nonstop blockbuster Ghostbusters action. **Best Game Boy Graphics Ever!**





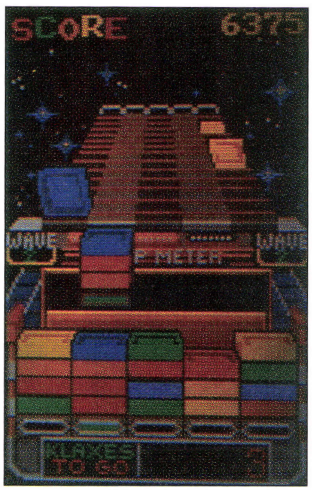
ACTIVISION

See your local retailer or call 1-800-227-6900 to order.

Ghostbusters™ II logo ©1989 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All rights reserved. Nintendo, Game Boy, and the official seals are trademarks of Nintendo of America, Inc.

CIRCLE #144 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Fortunately, your paddle can hold up to five tiles, so you don't have to drop each tile before catching the next one. The tricky part is, when you choose to drop a tile, the top tile of the stack is the one that goes first, and that might not be the color you want to drop. One way around this is to push up on the joypad and "toss" the top tile back onto the conveyor, giving yourself a few extra seconds to deposit the tile(s) you want. Of course, chances are you're tossing tiles back onto the conveyor along with other tiles already coming your way, making the task of catching them doubly difficult. Drop too many tiles or fill up the pit, and the game is over.



All aspects of the Atari Games' *Klax* coin-op game are in the Lynx version, from the intense strategy to the scream you hear when a piece falls off the edge.

Klax is very addictive and quite a challenge—particularly if you can manage to set off the secret warp and fling yourself to a much higher level, where the action is almost too fast to be comprehended.

The game I reviewed was a prototype and did not yet feature a snazzy title screen or finale. Yet, unfinished or not, it's one hell of a game. The graphics are nearly identical to the arcade version, and the sound effects are dead-ringers for those on the coin-op. The highlights are the female voice that tells you what kind of wave it is and goes "ooh!" and "yeah!" when you make a big Klax, the scream of a tile as it falls off the conveyor without being caught and the sound of an audience that applauds your successes and chants "Awww" when you blow it. Good stuff.

Dexterity

SNK for the Game Boy

Dexter Dolittle has a fabulous imagination—one that looks destined to get him into trouble. He imagines "magic puzzle rooms" in which he has to dodge and eliminate opponents and collect bonus items, all the while trying to flip all the floor tiles of each room from white to black. When Dexter succeeds in flipping all of the tiles from one color to the next, that room is completed and he goes on to the next one.

The enemies constantly cause problems. Some flip tiles to white after you've made them black; others just get in the way, and yet others actually "shatter" tiles, eliminating them and making the playfield navigation impossible. Fortunately, you can deal with these opponents in several ways: smash them with a moveable block, turn them to fruit bonus objects by picking up the appropriate bonus item or, most commonly, hit them with a tile being flipped. Once knocked out, an opponent can be safely picked up and thrown away. One neat touch is that you can throw a stunned enemy at an active one, using the first to eliminate the second!

This game is pretty neat, featuring varying playfields and even a mode allowing you to play levels that feature multiple rooms you can go back and forth between. Get tired of one room, take a break and work on another! It also supports the Video Link, so two players can compete.

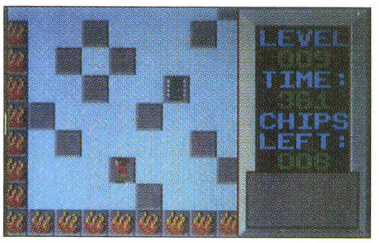
Chip's Challenge

Atari for the Lynx

"Nerdy Chip McCallahan suddenly stops eating his lunch. Melinda the Mental Marvel is sitting down next to him! Melinda smiles. 'Chip,' she says, 'if you finish the *Challenge*, you can join our computer club, the Bit Busters!' Chip has been a distant admirer of Melinda for a long time. He crunches his bag of pretzels and gulps, 'I'll do it!'"

Chip, to put it bluntly, must be brain-dead. If he had any idea of what "The Challenge" entailed, he'd have tucked his tail between his legs and run screaming. Why? Because "The Challenge" is 140+ levels of brain-wracking puzzles that, more often than not, result in Chip getting drowned, fried or snuffed by roaming monsters!

Chip's Challenge is a vicious and addictive puzzle game. Each level has but one solution, and finding that solution is where the challenge lies. You maneuver Chip, who is unarmed and undefended, through the maze of each level, figuring out how to eliminate or avoid obstacles, collect any computer chips required and escape with your life, usually before an all-too-short time limit expires.



***Chip's Challenge* for the Lynx lives up to its name, as you lead nerdy Chip through more than 144 levels of enthralling and testing puzzles.**

As far as graphics and audio *Chip's Challenge* does not strain the Lynx's ability, however, the myriad puzzles will keep you occupied for weeks, maybe months! There are 144 levels and four "bonus" levels, many of which take hours upon hours to figure out. Fortunately, there are no "life" limits on this game, so you don't have to keep starting over from square one (there are also passwords for each level).

One extra nice touch in this game is that if you continuously mess up a level, after a while you will be asked if you'd like to skip on to the next one, which means that players who can never seem to master one particular level will not find themselves stopped there forever. There's not much else to say about *Chip's Challenge*, except that "The Challenge" really lives up to its namesake. A definite must-have!

Flipull

Taito for the Game Boy

At first, I didn't know what to make of this game. Like so many of them I've received, it was a prototype with no instructions whatsoever. So, I played it—and played it and played it. Despite the lack of directions, I was able to figure it out (more or less). In the game you control a little "thing" (which looks like a ghost from *Pac-Man*) that moves vertically along the right side of the playfield, facing a pile of blocks to the lower left. Essentially, your goal is to toss the current block you are holding and use it to destroy identical types of



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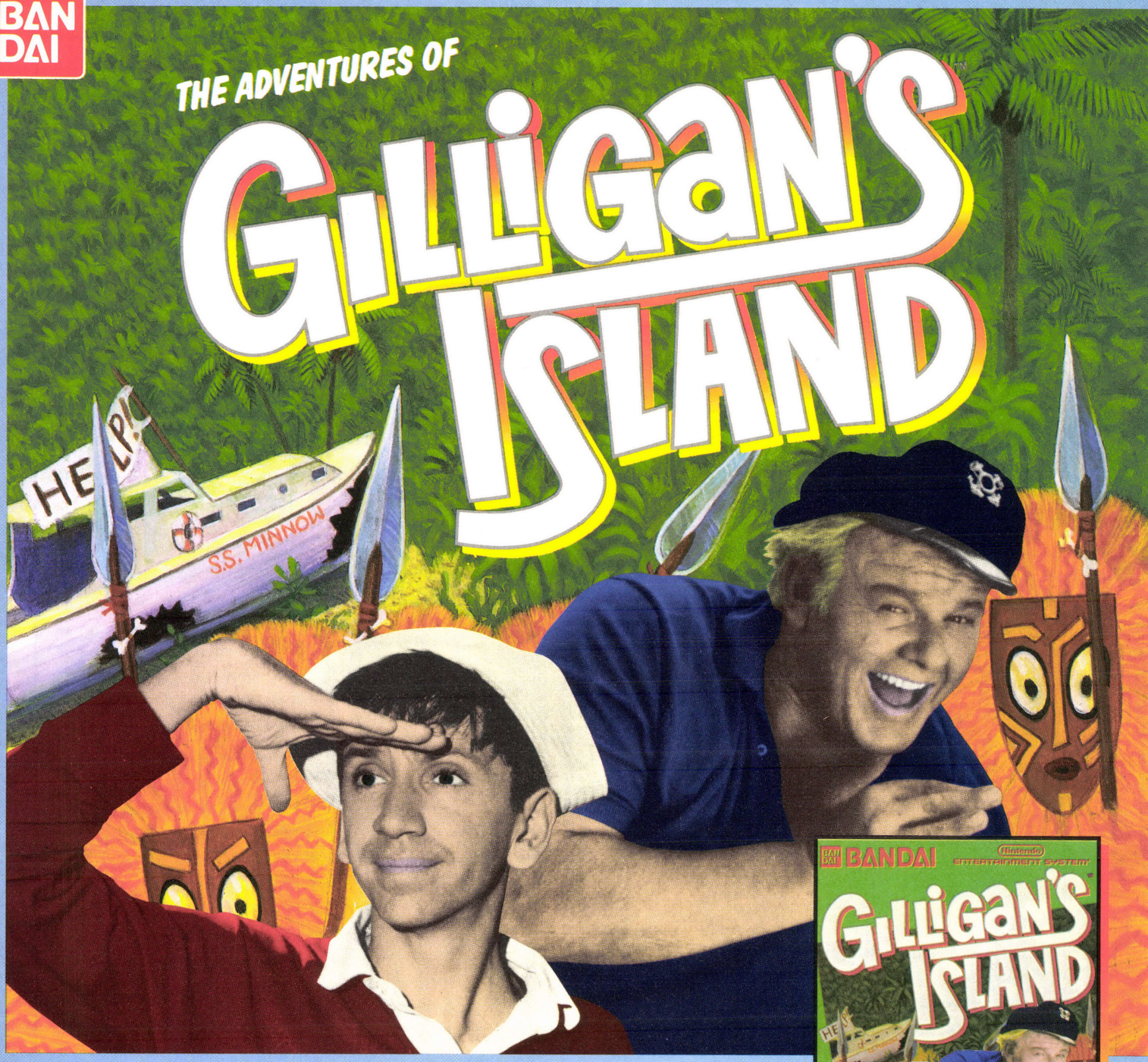
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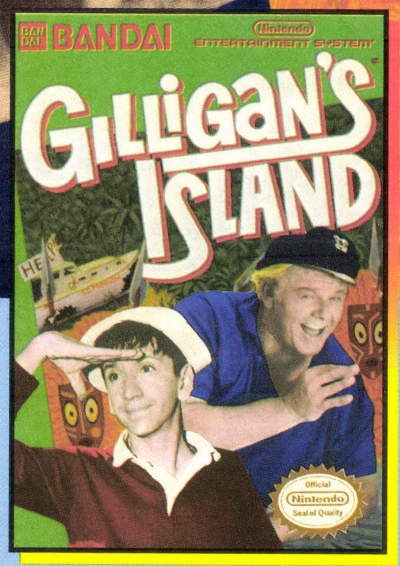
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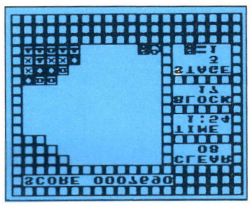
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blocks. For instance, you can only use a block with an "X" on it to destroy other X blocks. If you hit another kind of block, it stuns your on-screen persona and wastes time (there's a time limit). When the block you've just thrown stops after smashing an identical block, it dislodges the block after and tosses it back to you to use next.

The game ends when you don't have any moves left, which means you're holding a block that you can't use because no identical blocks in the pile are accessible. You complete a round when you cut the pile's blocks down to either equal or less than the number listed under the "CLEAR" count.

It's hard to recommend a game when you're guessing about exactly what it is and how to play it, but I found *Flipull* (whatever that means) entertaining, challenging and something I'll come back to. The graphics could be better, and so could the sound, but the game's the thing, and this seems like a decent one.



Taito's *Flipull* for the Game Boy is a strategic puzzle game that requires you to match up blocks and quickly eliminate them from the playfield in a tense race against the clock.

Todd's Adventures in Slime World

Atari for the Lynx

The name "Lynx" was chosen because it sounds like "links," hinting that the machines can be networked. Both the Game Boy and the Lynx can be hooked to other units for multiplayer games, but where the Game Boy is limited to two players, the Lynx can go further—as this game demonstrates. Have a Lynx and seven friends who also own one? Good, now, all of you go buy *Slime World* cards and then Comlynx all eight systems together. Yes, an eight-player game. I'm not kidding!

Slime World is simple in concept, complex in reality. You are dropped into subterranean caverns on the planet, where you search for valuable "slime gems." A more immediate concern is just staying alive, and most important, finding the exit to the surface. The caverns are huge, complex affairs, laden with dangers, both obvious and hidden. The most persistent danger is the slime, which drips from points on the ceiling, fills pits on the cavern floor and sprays from the rupturing corpses of enemies you attack. The more slime that gets on you, the greener your character gets, until he finally "pops" and goes up in a spurt of slime. Fortunately, there are slime shields scattered here and there and occasional puddles of water where you can wash the goop off.

There are many types of enemies, from screeching monsters that slime you on contact to those that hang overhead and drip slime. There are other creatures that, when shot, throw red slime out. Red slime is fatal on contact, so watch it! One really sick-looking creature does nothing more than clamp onto you, sucking your head and upper body into itself, preventing you from bending over to pick up useful items. This thing looks really gross, makes a disgusting sucking sound and is a nuisance, but fortunately, a quick dip into a pool of water will dissolve it. This situation is funny, in a gross sort of way.

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CIRCLE #147 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Combatribes

BY AMERICAN TECHNOS

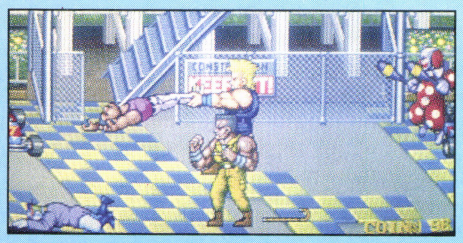
I'm tired of gangs terrorizing the good people of this town. We need to pay these guys a visit and teach them a lesson or two. Let's go Blitz. C'mon, Berserker. It's time for some action!

In *Combatribes*, by American Technos (a two- or three-player game), you control one of up to three players battling gangs located in various sites across the city. For instance, you'll start your battle against a motorcycle gang on the streets of the city. You'll then move to the fun and festive confines of a carnival, where you'll take on a slew of club-carrying clowns and mimes armed with canes.

As you try to clean up a crime-ridden city, you'll fight it out in four more rounds, which include fighting skating punks at a disco roller rink, dealing wih a baseball stadium full of barbarians and matching blows with army troops in a heliport before you enter the sixth and final round.

Each of the three characters has his own traits. While Berserker has both strength and speed, Bollova has lots of strength but little speed, and Blitz is quick but not as strong as the other two. Not only can the characters punch and kick, they can also perform nine other moves that range from feet-swings to butting heads to stomping on top of the enemies. Along with these moves, you can find various items in each round that can be picked up and used to knock out a group of enemies simultaneously. Examples range from motorcycles in the first round to pinball machines in Round 3.





There are two ways in which your game can end: one is if you lose all your energy, and the other is if you run out of time. Even though you run a higher chance of losing all your energy—following a particularly nasty series of blows from your opponents—you can't forget about your time limit. Once the time runs out, it's game over, regardless of the amount of energy you have left. (Round 3, for instance, is a tough area to get through without running out of time.)

One other thing you have to be careful of is not to put in coins so that you get more than 9,990 units of energy. As soon as the counter reaches what would be 10,000 units of energy, it then wraps around to zero units of energy. Sorry, game over—and a lot of money down the old tubes.

As far as the graphics and animation, it doesn't get any better than what is found in *Combatribes*. Throughout the entire game you'll find great detail in all aspects, from the foreground to the background. And the characters' ability to pick up the enemy and smoothly throw or swing them around the screen are just two examples of how the animation increases the enjoyment of the game. The sound, however, is average, with the standard battalion of grunts and groans.

When it comes to the bottom line, *Combatribes* is definitely a money game—you'll put a lot of quarters into this one. There are too many enemies (especially the end bosses) that can take a pounding and never seem to die. Despite this fact, however, *Combatribes* is still a fun multiplayer game that is highlighted by the graphics and different moves each character can perform. If you get a chance, give it a try and see what you think.

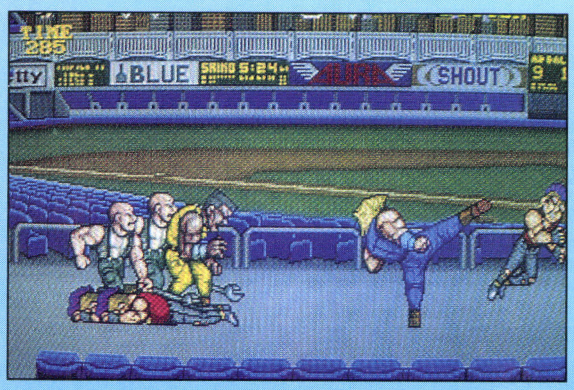
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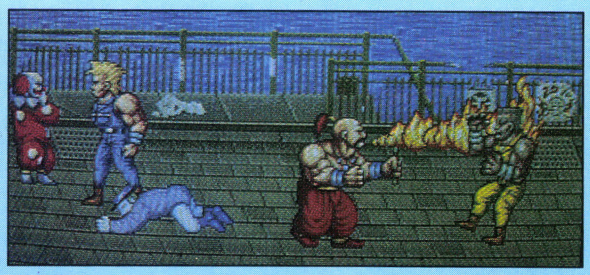
Columns

BY SEGA

Many say that there was an ancient Phoenician game where six kinds of exotic jewels fell from the sky. When three or more of the same kind of jewel were lined up, they would magically disappear. Well, Sega has brought this legendary game to the arcades in the form of *Columns*.

Using a joystick and a button, you'll control a vertically aligned set of three jewels as they fall





Double Dragon, step aside. American Technos' Combatribes is a wild free-for-all that features a variety of offensive moves, such as swinging enemies by their feet or stomping on them.

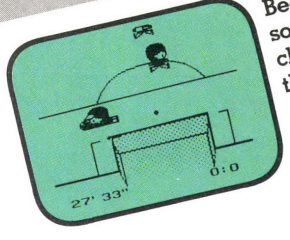
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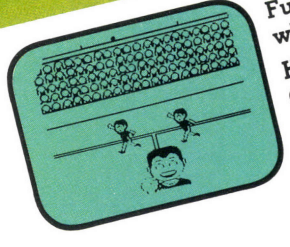
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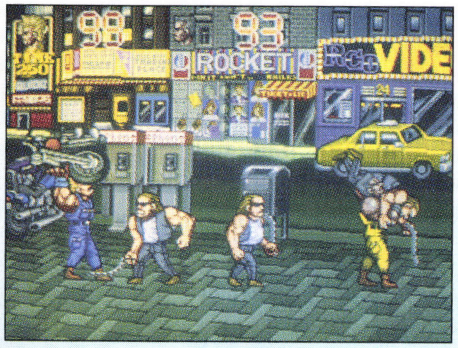
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CIRCLE #148 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Your Combatribes' adversaries are well-stocked with weapons, but you can pick up items, like motorcycles, and toss them at the bad guys.



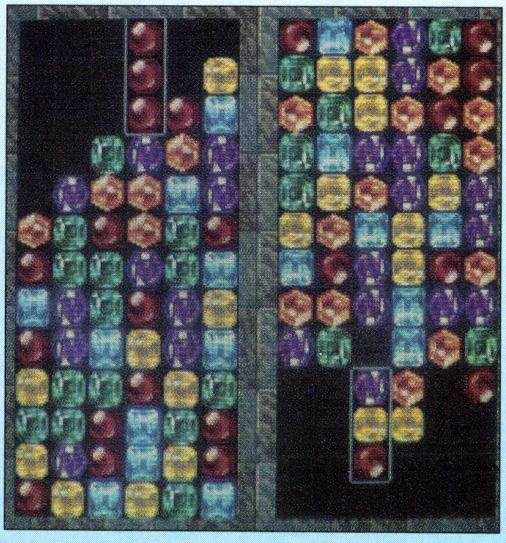


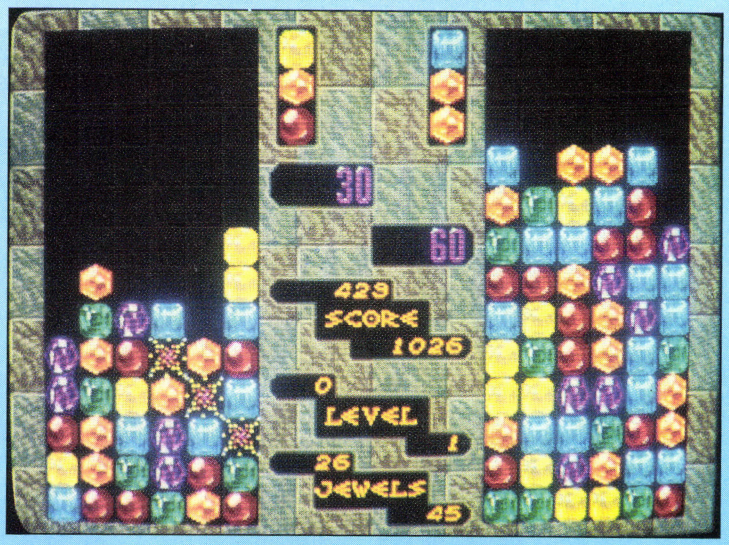
from the top of the screen. Pressing the button will let you shuffle the three jewels as you attempt to line up three or more horizontally, vertically or diagonally at the bottom of the screen. Once you have made a match, the jewels will mysteriously flash and disappear.

Thankfully, the game gives you some time to attempt matches, because even after the pieces drop, you can move and/or shuffle for a second or so. Using this strategy, you can correct previous mistakes by sliding jewels into matches. You may even cause a chain reaction. This can happen after a match is made, because the disappearance of some sets of jewels may cause others to fill in the blank spaces, possibly resulting in more matches. This is usually done more by accident than by skill—at least in my case that was true.

To add some spice to this strategy game, there is a special jewel that sometimes appears in the medium and difficult levels of the game. This jewel changes colors and is basically a wild card—similar to the wild tile in *Klax*—allowing you to complete a match where you normally might not have been able to.

There isn't much to *Columns* graphically or in the way of animation, but that is generally the nature of strategy games. What graphics and animation are present, however, are used effectively to enhance the pleasure of the game. While the object of the game is to eliminate as many jewels as possible, your game will end if the jewels reach the top. And that seems to happen all too quickly for me, because the pace at which the pieces fall picks up drastically after you begin. It leaves me with this conclusion: If you had an easy time with the arcade version of *Tetris*, which left other arcade-goers gaping, then *Columns* is the game for you.





Sega's Columns is a challenging strategy game that requires to you react quickly in shuffling and placing colored jewels as they fall from the top of the screen. Matches will cause the gems to disappear from the playfield.

Smash T.V.

BY WILLIAMS ELECTRONICS

The year is 1999. The place is the set of *Smash T.V.*, a great new action game from Williams. *Smash T.V.* is a futuristic game show with a twist. Imagine if you can a blend of the movie *The Running Man* and Williams' classic *Robotron*. Either one or two "contestants" compete in a mazelike studio for cash, merchandise and the most important prize, survival! Of course, with the opportunity to win toasters, VCRs, televisions, the occasional car, as well as oodles of cash, who wouldn't go up against mindless mutants, robots, drones and combustible, obese soldiers (known affectionately as "Mr. Shrapnel") for a piece of the action, right?

Man wasn't meant to kill with hands alone, so your game-show host has generously provided you with a variety of lethal devices to protect yourself as you travel through the various arenas. Grenades, missiles, lasers and the ever-present smart bomb are all at your disposal. Other defensive devices are also available, such as force fields and spinning shields, which help you stay alive long enough to win just one more toaster. Control of each player is by two eight-way joysticks, with one for movement and one for shooting. They are perfect for this type of game, as *Robotron* players will concur.

While the similarity to *Robotron* is obvious from first glance, there are many differences that make *Smash T.V.* a unique adventure. There is a map of sorts presented at the beginning of each area that shows the different ways you can travel through the arenas in order to reach the boss waiting within the last arena. Along the way, you must fight through a menagerie of robots and drones and avoid land mines, tanks and many other enemies too bizarre to describe.

Different weapon power-ups appear with regularity in random spots upon the playing field, along with small gift boxes. The latter, when grabbed, award anything from a 2600-inch television, to a luxurious vacation. Money also appears in large, scattered heaps consisting of gold and silver bars, along with the regular green stuff. The weapons and gifts both disappear from the screen after a few seconds, but the

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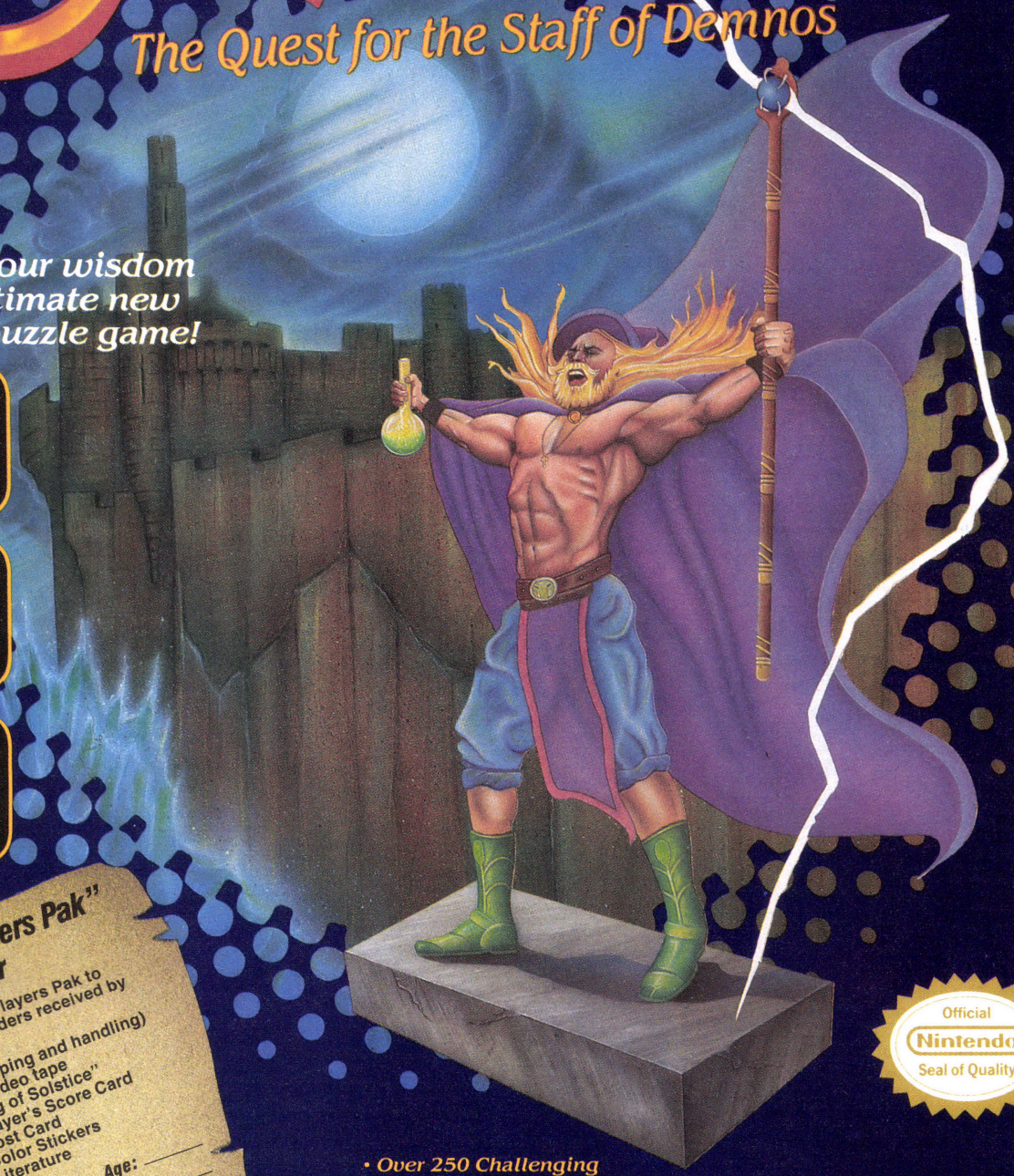
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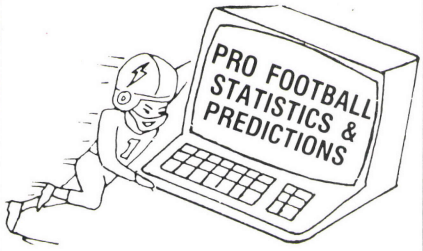
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money will stay indefinitely. The weapons are immediately useful and last for a certain number of shots, indicated by a small bar graph near your score. When you run low, a warning tone lets you know without having to take a break from the action on-screen.

Bonus rooms packed with gifts are located in certain parts of each area, and when you enter one of these areas, a few seconds are allocated to allow you to grab as many goodies as possible before they all disappear, and the room is invaded by enemies.

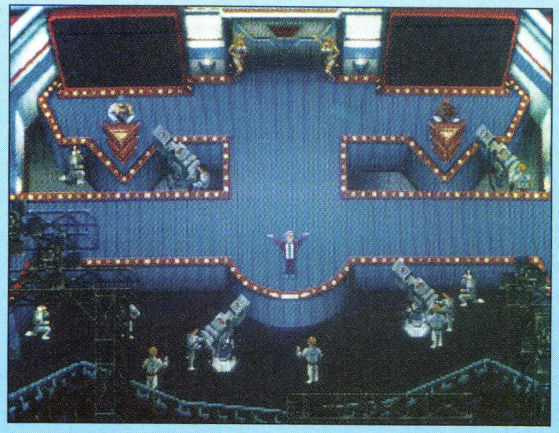
The object is simple: Grab as much money and as many prizes as possible, while surviving until the end of an area to collect your bonus money. As if making it to the end weren't challenge enough, a boss monster must be defeated as well. These guys don't lay down after a few shots, either; be prepared to lob a couple of hundred grenades, missiles and bombs, all while trying to avoid getting roasted yourself. If you succeed, you will be rewarded with a crisp, graphic bloodbath as the abomination finally bites the video dust.

Now that you have actually made it through alive—though perhaps short the few quarters it may have taken you to continue—it's time to be rewarded for your effort. Each player is shown on-screen before a podium as the various prize counts mount up, and the equivalent amount of money is added to your score. Don't rest too long; you're soon off to the next area, with new prizes and new challenges to conquer!

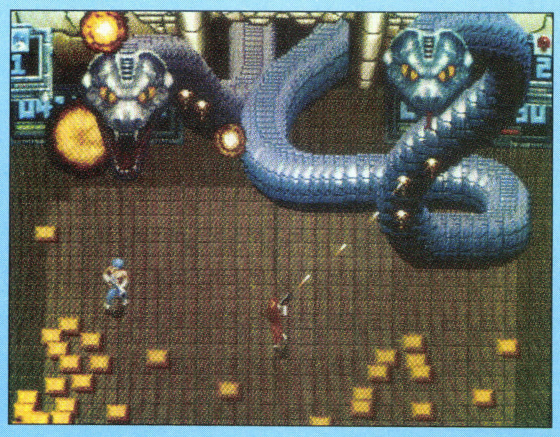
Smash T.V. is another game that is destined to join the ranks of previous Williams' classics. Graphically, nothing is missing, from the bloody chunks that fly skyward when a player dies (watch out for that flying eyeball) to the virtual geyser of blood that flies out when Mutoid Man at the end of the first area is dispatched. Of course, I couldn't forget to mention the well-endowed blonde ladies that rest upon each arm of your *Smash T.V.* host as he puts forth a comment at the beginning of each arena! The sound effects are equally excellent: The "Go, Go, Go!" starting each area and the pounding coupled with frustrated howls of rage from the boss monsters accent the action perfectly.

Although a continue option is available, don't be fooled. This game isn't another in the recent trend of quarter-eating machines that only allow you to advance anywhere in the game by satisfying their unending appetite for metal. While it may take a little time to figure out strategies, the game isn't impossible, and you should be able to advance quite far (especially with a teammate). If you haven't played this one yet, give it try, and see if you aren't hooked. I'll admit I am.





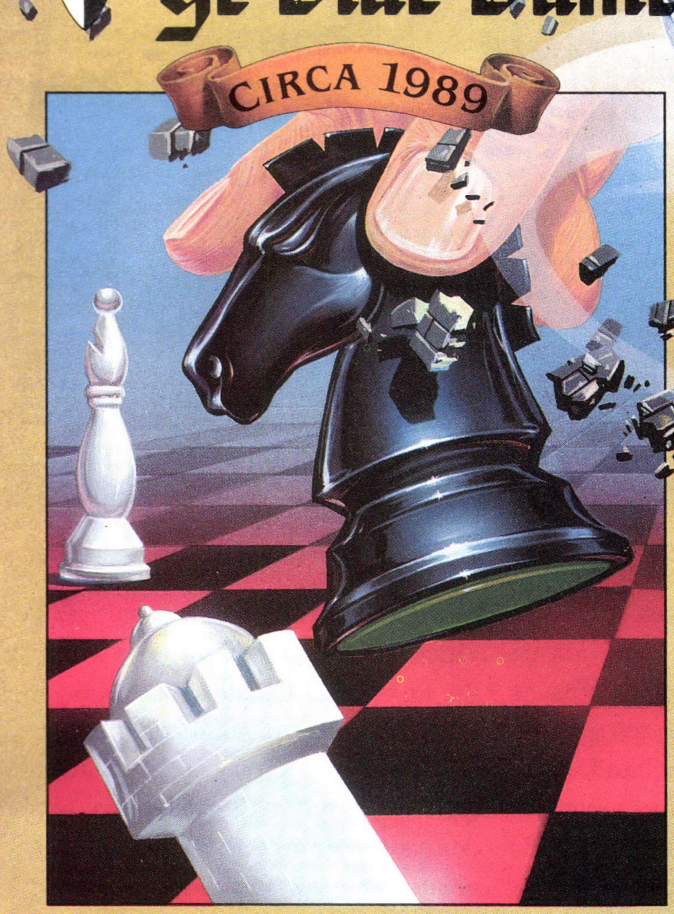




The setting in Williams' Smash T.V. is a mix between the classic Robotron and the movie Running Man. In it you must battle various creatures on the set of a barbaric game show set in the future, which is displayed as an overhead view and resurrects the two-joystick control method of Robotron.

Battle Chess™

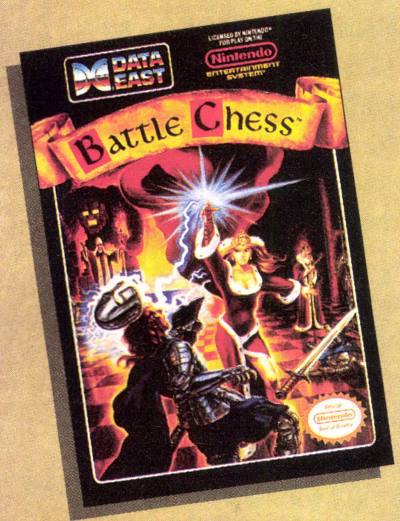
Ye Olde Game is Not the Same



KNIGHT TAKES ROOK



KNIGHT OBLITERATES ROOK!

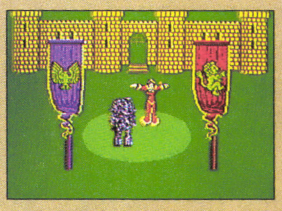


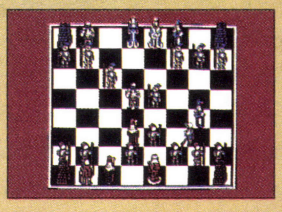
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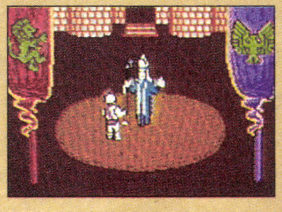
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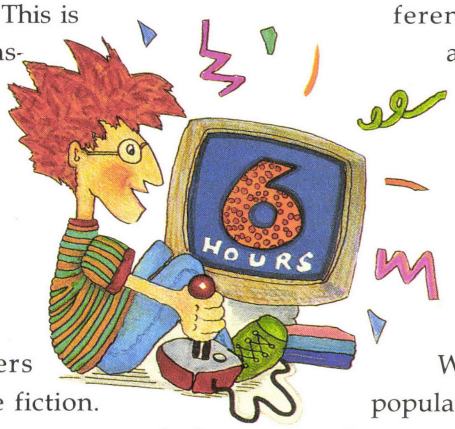
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What Computer Gamers

by Arnie Katz and the

Fantasy is the most popular theme for home-computer games, say respondents to VG&CE's *1990* "Survey of Electronic Gaming" (April 1990). On a 1-10 scale, with "10" representing highest interest, computer gamers rated fantasy 7.9. This is the most enthusiastic reaction to any game theme on the survey by any group!



The computerists are also the only group that prefers fantasy to science fiction. Both the video gamers and the megagamers (see sidebar) gave science fiction a 7.5 score, but futuristic fare only drew a 7.3 from the compuplayers.

The gap between these two subjects and other themes is larger for computer users than for any other segment of the electronic-gaming hobby. No genre rates even a 6.0, though mystery and military are both close, with identical 5.9 averages.

Computerists care less about Westerns than any other type of game; that's the way video gamers see it too. On the other hand, computer gamers couldn't feel more differently about martial-arts contests than the video-gaming group. Hand-to-hand combat is the least favorite computer-game subject, except for the Old West, yet it is the *most* popular video-game theme, except for monsters. Those who play primarily on computer gave martial arts a pitiful 4.6 rating.

The Demographics

Differences in age and income levels account for the divergent taste in subject matter between computer and video gamers.

More than twice as many women participate in computer gaming as video gaming. Other reports insist the number of female video gamers is climbing as publishers market more varied cartridges. Most analysts explain female preference for computer games in terms of the greater richness and depth of entertainment software. Another factor is that most women don't especially like martial-arts and military-combat contests, two of the hottest video-game categories.

It should come as no surprise to learn that computer gaming is definitely for the older player. More than half, 53%, are over 26 years old. More than twice as many computer gamers than in the overall survey sample are over 40.

As would be expected, older players have more money than the relatively youthful video-gaming audience. The computerists are more careful spenders, however, and their hobby budgets run an average of $2 less than the cartridge fans. This un-

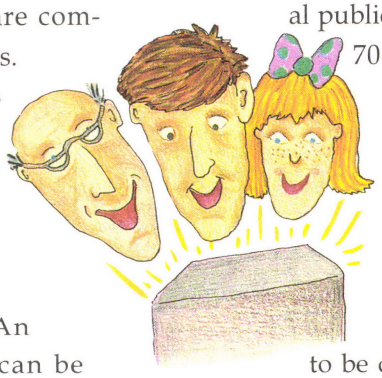
MERS' POLL:

TWO

Like — and What They Play

VG&CE Editorial Staff

doubtedly reflects the lower price of computer software compared to cartridges.



Computerists may spend less, but they play more frequently than the typical electronic-game fan. An incredible 80% can be found at the gaming screen at least six hours a week, and a third average at least ten hours over the same period. Not one single computerist who replied to the survey devotes under two hours a week.

Don't expect to run into red-hot computer-gaming fans at the local arcade. Approximately one-third never feed the play-for-pay machines, and going to an arcade is a "sometime" outing for another 60%.

The Machines Today

Computer gamers who read VG&CE are less heavily committed to IBM PC computers than the general public at large. While more than 70% of all home computers are compatible with the IBM system, only about 40% of VG&CE's computer-gaming specialists own or have access to such a unit.

The Atari ST is supposed to be dead in the U.S., but you'd never know it by asking computer gamers. More than one in four have an ST, compared to just 7% owning an Amiga.

Combining computer-owning specialists with the megagamers lowers the dominance of the IBM PC even further to 31%. It also vaults the Commodore 64 into second place, the choice of 19%, followed by the Atari ST with 14%.

The computer specialists haven't exactly ignored video gaming. More than 60% own at least one videogame console. The NES has the lead with 27% of the owners, but a fair number still hold on to their Atari 2600s, Colecovisions and Mattel Intellivisions in working conditions. This suggests that some of yesteryear's video gamers have "moved on" to the computer branch of the hobby.

Computer Gamers Rate the Top Computer Games

Dungeon Master (4)
Mean Streets (4)
Pool of Radiance (3)
Tetris (2)
Empire (3)
Wasteland (2)
Space Quest (3)
King's Quest IV (2)
Strike Fleet (2)
Archon (2)
Shadow of the Beast (2)
Ultima IV (1)
Bard's Tale (2)
Doom Sayer (2)
Dragon's Lair (2)
Jack Nicholas Golf (2)
Might and Magic I (2)
Oregon Trail (2)
Populous (1)
Leisure Suit Larry

Tomorrow's Machines

Today's computer gamer is tomorrow's megagamer. More of the computer players surveyed by VG&CE plan to buy new video-game machines in the next 12 months than intend to purchase additional computers. Plainly, computer owners are satisfied with their present systems for game-playing disk products, but they want to add the cartridge dimension to their hobby.

More computerists, 6%, will buy an Amiga than all other brands combined. Perhaps 10% of the group will add another micro system to their hardware. On the other hand, roughly half of the computer-gaming specialists have a video-game machine on their shopping list. Future plans don't really form a definable pattern, so the best guess is that most will watch the ads, read magazine reports and then make the choice closer to the actual purchasing date.

Some current video gamers also plan to buy a computer, presumably to expand their gaming horizons. Almost 10% want a new IBM PC, 6% hope to acquire an Amiga and another 8% haven't selected the brand yet.

The Final Reckoning

This survey is the first step toward defining the nature and direction of electronic-gaming fandom. It shows that though many are currently video- *or* computer-game specialists, an equal number love electronic gaming in all its forms. Furthermore, this group is growing as the specialists discover the joys of other types of electronic gaming. VG&CE's wide-spectrum coverage will continue to expand as new forms of interactive entertainment are born.

THREE TYPES OF

Electronic Gamers

Electronic-gaming fandom is divided into three main subgroups. Each exhibits a unique set of interests and attitudes as well as distinctive demographic and consumer purchase patterns.

As explained in the first part of this series in the last issue, the largest group, 51%, includes those who primarily like video games. A little over half of all video-game specialists are in the 12-16 age category and 6% are even younger. A hefty percentage of video gamers, roughly one in four, falls into the 26-40 age range.

In general, these players are exceptionally interested in video carts (9.7), moderately interested in coin-ops (6.9) and only casually interested in entertainment software (5.5).

Computer-gaming specialists constitute the smallest slice of the audience. It has the highest percentages of women (13%) and "over 40s" (13%). The typical computer gamer is over 26 years old and earns $20,000-$60,000 annually.

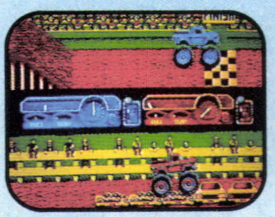
Compugamers spend about a dollar a week less than other electronic gamers, though they devote a couple of hours a week more to actual play than video-game specialists. Computer gamers love software (9.3), but display little enthusiasm for video games (5.3) or coin-ops (5.3).

The remaining 43% of survey respondents are what we call megagamers—people who love all aspects of electronic gaming. Megagamers come in all ages, though the group as a whole averages a little younger than the other classifications. A megagamer isn't as apt to be an arcade regular as a video-game specialist, but almost all occasionally visit coin-op centers. They put about the same amount of time and money into the hobby as the average VG&CE reader.

Megagamers don't like video games quite as much as the specialists, but they display a more balanced interest than either of the other groups. They love coin-ops (7.6) and are even more avid computer gamers (7.9).

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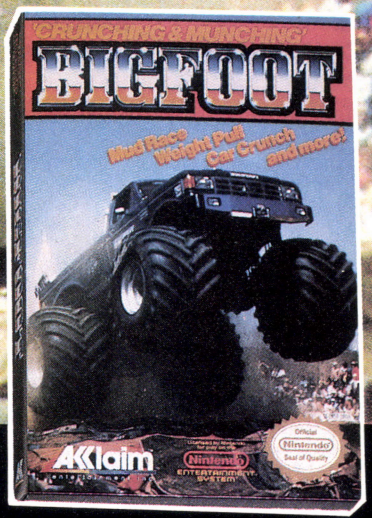


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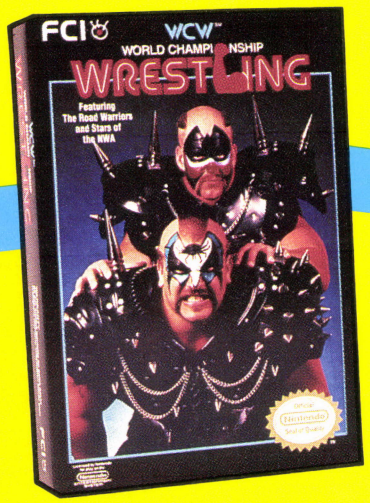
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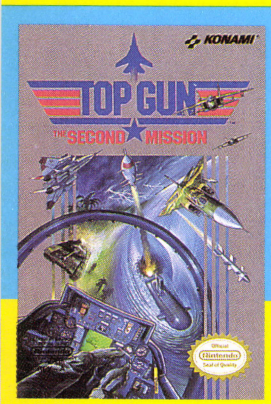


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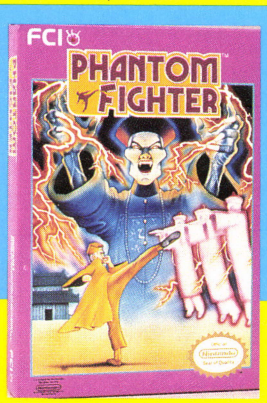
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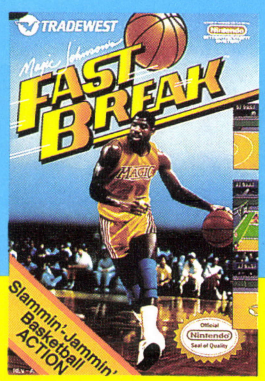
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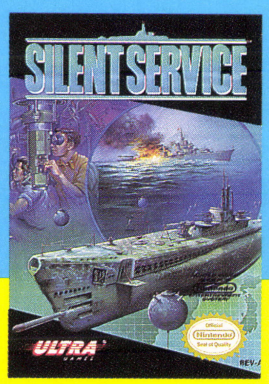
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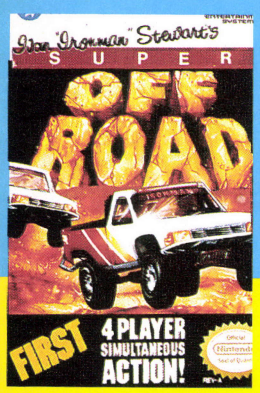
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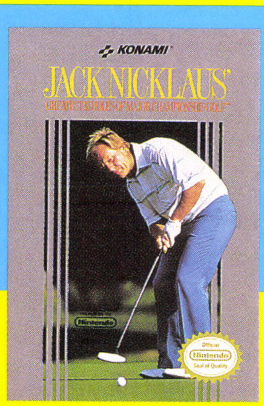
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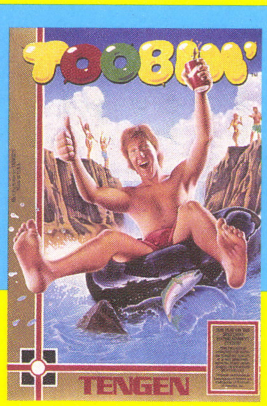
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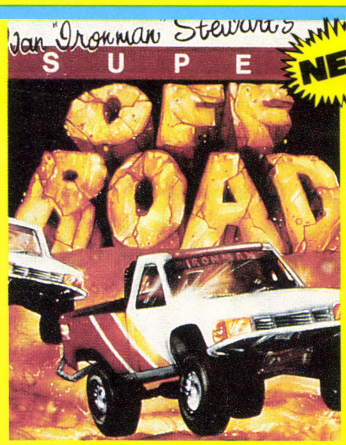
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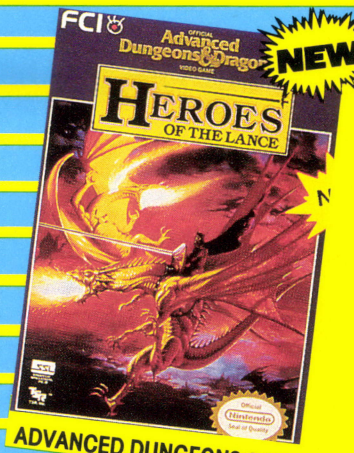
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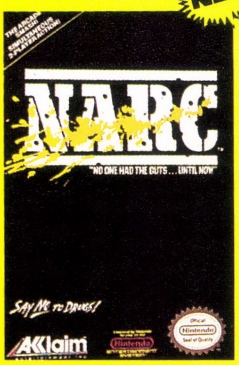
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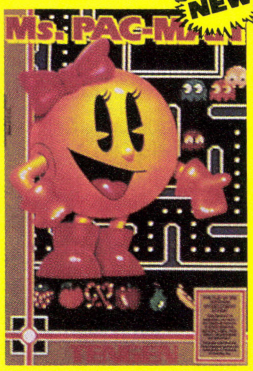
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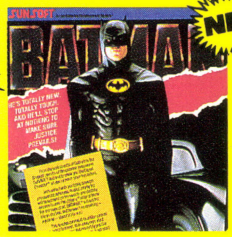
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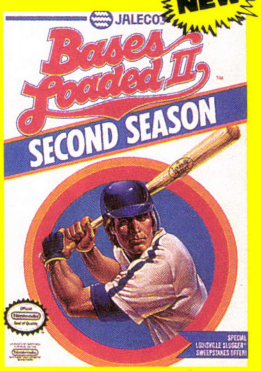
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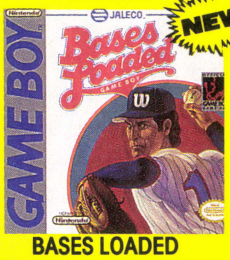
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THE MAKING OF THE ORIGIN SYSTEMS'

WING COMMANDER

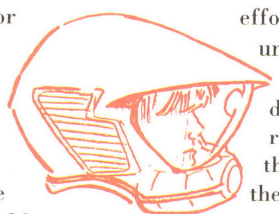
BY ANDY EDDY

Setting: June 1990. Chicago. The sound reverberates across the crowded North Hall at the Summer CES. This intrepid reporter wends his way through the buzzing throng of press and trade—who swarm like ants through the booths containing video-game cartridges, joysticks and computer software—unable to focus on any single conversation, instead hearing flashes of buzzwords: Nintendo, Genesis, TurboGrafx-16. Don't forget the sales pitches that strike like a branding iron at your eardrums.

Oh, yeah—and sore feet from hours of walking.

But all that was drowned out by a siren calling out. The din of an intense space battle; the haunting music drew me like a spider's web. I made my way to booth 6447, where a shady mob called Origin Systems—led by a slick marketing dude named Malone—was brainwashing helpless individuals with its wares. But I didn't know that then....

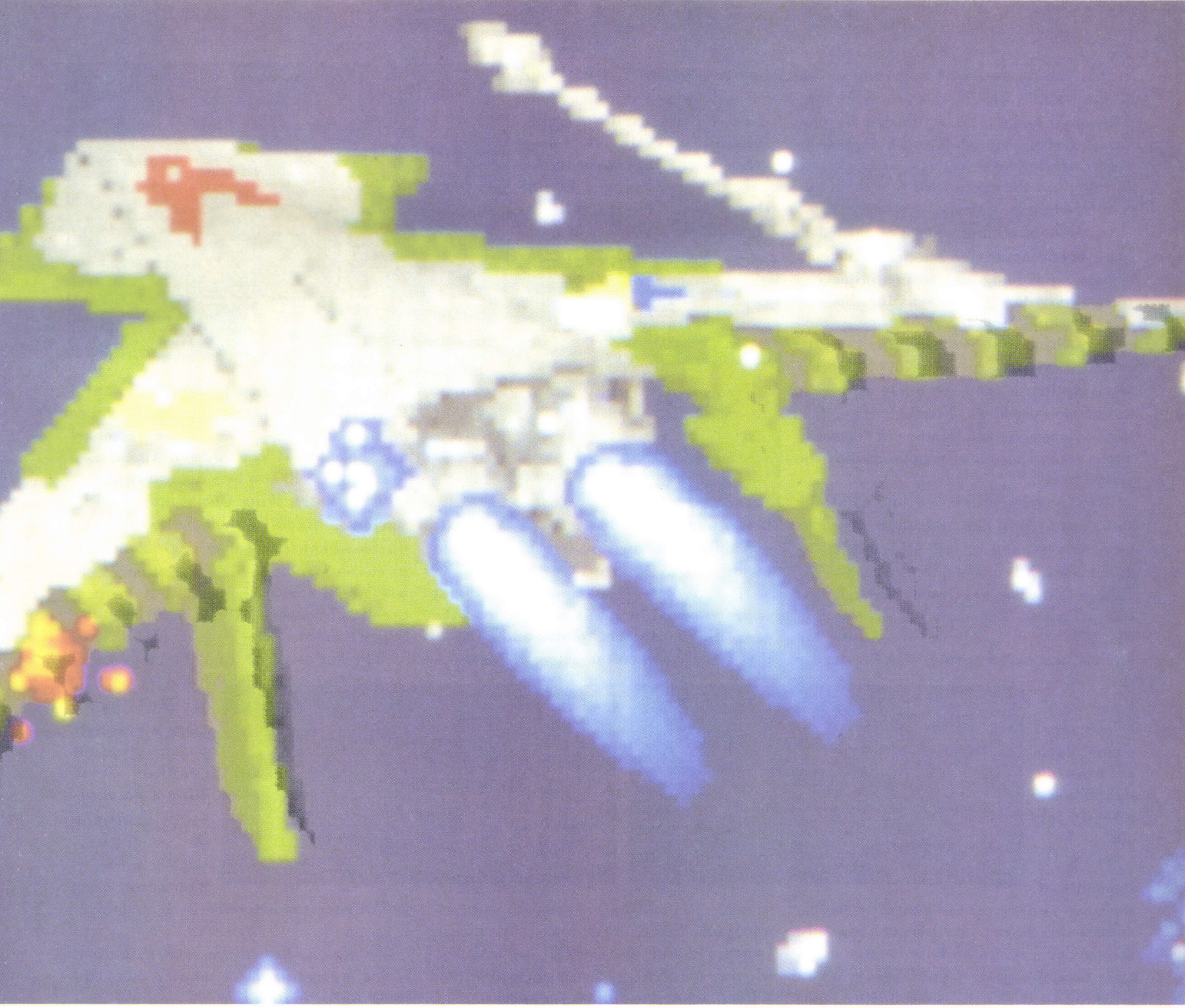
Wing Commander: The 3-D Space Combat Simulator. Its name sounded impressive enough, but seeing this wild game from Origin Systems brought images of *Star Wars*, *Space 1999* and *Battlestar Galactica* to a computer screen. The 27th-century space battle will no doubt define what is state-of-the-art for arcade-action computer games. Similarly, it will show people that flight simulators can be fun. But mainly it will be copied by other developers, who will see *Wing Commander*'s style as something they will have to add to their software to keep up with the Joneses.



THE STORY

A particularly nasty band of aliens, the Kilrathi, have engaged the Terran Confederation in a universe-wide conflict. Over the years the Terrans have built their federation through the vast exploration of space, grouping together various civilizations in an attempt to create strength through cooperation. It's worked, but the Kilrathi are relentless in their efforts to destroy this friendly union of planets.

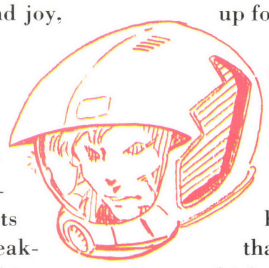
All attempts to enter into discussions with the Kilrathi result in laser fire. It seems that the only way to deal with the Empire of Kilrah is on their terms. These battles will bring your best pilots and wingmen into dreaded encounters with this savage race of space pirates. The abilities of the Kilrathi Imperial Star Force leave no room for slack in your flying. One flaw in your dogfighting battle plan means certain death.



Not only do you have the best pilots on your side, but you also can place them in some of the finest starfighter craft and weapons this side of the Milky Way. As you gain experience against the Kilrathi, you'll be able to upgrade your wings, perhaps up to the Confederation's pride and joy, the Raptor class.

Lights, Camera...Action!

Though this kind of space battle has been created for computer gamers before, Origin, behind the impressive talents of Chris Roberts, aimed at breaking new ground. While talking to Roberts, who's the youthful age of 22, the fact that he has been in this industry for eight years comes out. He first started developing games in his native England, though he was born in Redwood City, California (to a British father and an American mother), and has three major successes to his credit: *Wizardore*, an arcade-adventure for Imagine Software; *Match Day*, a soccer game for Ocean Software; and *Stryker's Run*, a side-scrolling shoot-'em-up for Superior Software.



In 1986, when his parents moved to Austin, Texas, Roberts was working on his next game project, *Ultrarealm*. After visiting his family, he decided that his work on *Ultrarealm*, which was renamed *Times of Lore*, was not dependent on location, and he moved to Austin. When *Times of Lore* was completed, a bidding war resulted between some of the main software companies—Electronic Arts and Brøderbund, among others—but Roberts went with Austin-based Origin, "not only because they were local, but they were some of the nicest guys I met in the business," Roberts said. It may have been one of the best decisions either Origin or Roberts have made: Roberts' *Times of Lore* and *Bad Blood* have been quite successful.

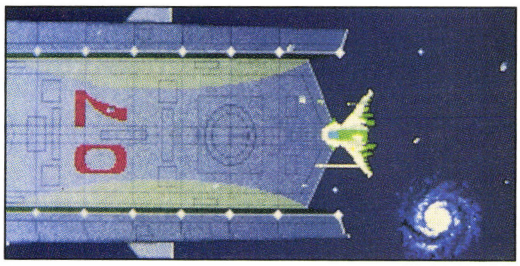


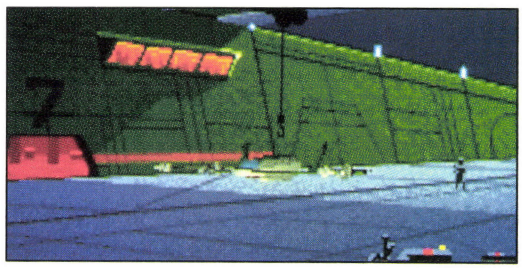
For *Wing Commander* (the name was changed from *Wingleader* when a conflict with a board game was discovered), Roberts wanted a realistic 3-D combat simulator, but for the most part it would have to be created from scratch because a project of this scope had never been attempted before. By the time the movielike process was done, *Wing Commander* would have a crew of six programmers, four graphic artists, two musi-

cians, one sound-effects person, one scripter and a budget of about $250,000. "We could make a cheesy slasher film for that," Roberts noted. The whole process began nearly two years ago, at Christmas of 1988, but the results will find their way to future Origin projects.

After determining what was needed to bring his dream to disk, Roberts created a system for moving bit-mapped objects in three dimensions. By developing this system, he could offer the realism he wanted without having to sacrifice the massive quantities of disk space needed to store a separate image for each angle an object could be viewed at. Furthermore, this method increases the number of "camera" angles *Wing Commander* could display the action from.

Next, artists sketched out what the ships would look like, and these drawings were ray-traced on an Amiga 3000 as 4,096-color, 3-D models, then ported to the IBM in 256-color VGA mode through custom programs. The shape tables, the data that tells the computer the make-up of the objects, were also ported over for use by the program. Finally, enhancements, such as landing lights, were added for polish.

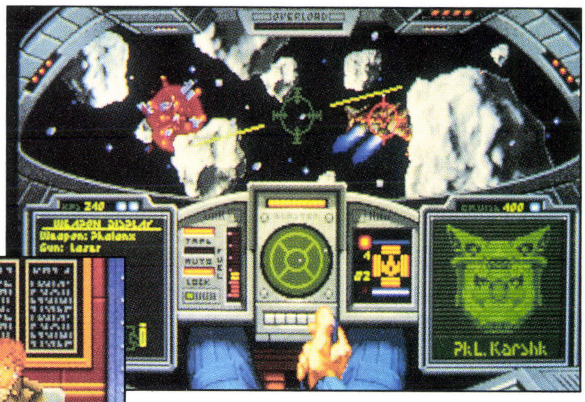




Other segments of the game were created in a manner similar to an actual movie. The design team would get together with a storyboard artist to discuss how the game would "play." The resulting scene sketches were digitized and used as templates for the graphic artists, who created extensive animations using *D-Paint Enhanced* by Electronic Arts. "We didn't want a digitized look," Roberts said, instead opting for an effect similar to rotoscoping, a process used in some animation, where filmed scenes are traced over by artists. This gives a realistic yet surreal look to the scenes.

Final touches, such as the first-person perspective of running down a hallway with the other pilots toward the starfighters, were added using videotaped segments, which were digitized and touched up by the artists. Again, the cinematic feel comes into full use.

The last major step was the integration of sound and music into *Wing Commander*. Employing the talents of George Alistair "The Fat Man" Sanger—whose work has been used by Lucasfilm Games, Wham-O and Mattel, among others—the intention was to have the soundtrack blend into the action. "We wanted [the music] to be seamless and in the background, much like a movie," Roberts explained. "But we also felt that it should add tension to the game."





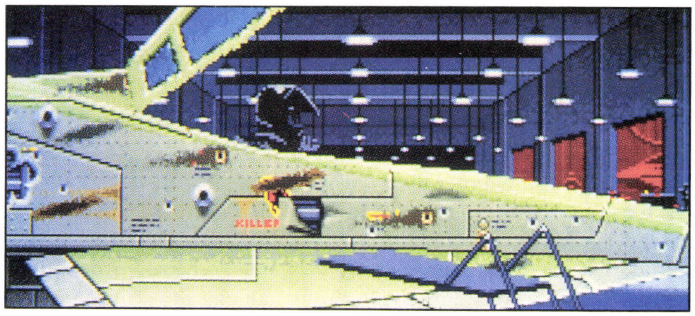
The strength of the soundtrack is that it is programmed in a manner similar to the game itself, with breakpoints and changes that are used when the action changes on-screen. Depending on when the player accomplishes certain feats, the music switches to other passages inconspicuously, whether it's a victory theme or death dirge. *Wing Commander* will also support optional soundboards to allow the player to fully enjoy the depth of the stereo sound effects and orchestral arrangements.

Coming to a ~~Theater~~ Computer Near You

The final result is a combination of movielike scenes tying together the intense arcade action that the player faces. The evolution of *Wing Commander* will begin on the IBM PC (supporting EGA, VGA, MCGA and Tandy graphics) around Christmas 1991, with a likely appearance on the Amiga line. Commodore's compact disc-based CDTV, using the Amiga as a foundation, will also be a natural location.

Eventually, *Wing Commander* will be ported to video-game consoles. Roberts discussed how easily the game—along with its stereo sound and high-resolution graphics—would port to the Genesis and, whenever it's brought to the U.S., Nintendo's Super Famicom.

The end result is that the name Chris Roberts will be on the lips of more electronic gamers, given the quantum leap *Wing Commander* will take in the computer-game community. Who knows what he'll accomplish before his 25th birthday?



As Malone flipped the switch, I stood there mesmerized by what I saw. My peripheral vision left me and my eyes locked onto what Malone called a game. Ha! This was no game, but I still stood there, frozen and entranced.

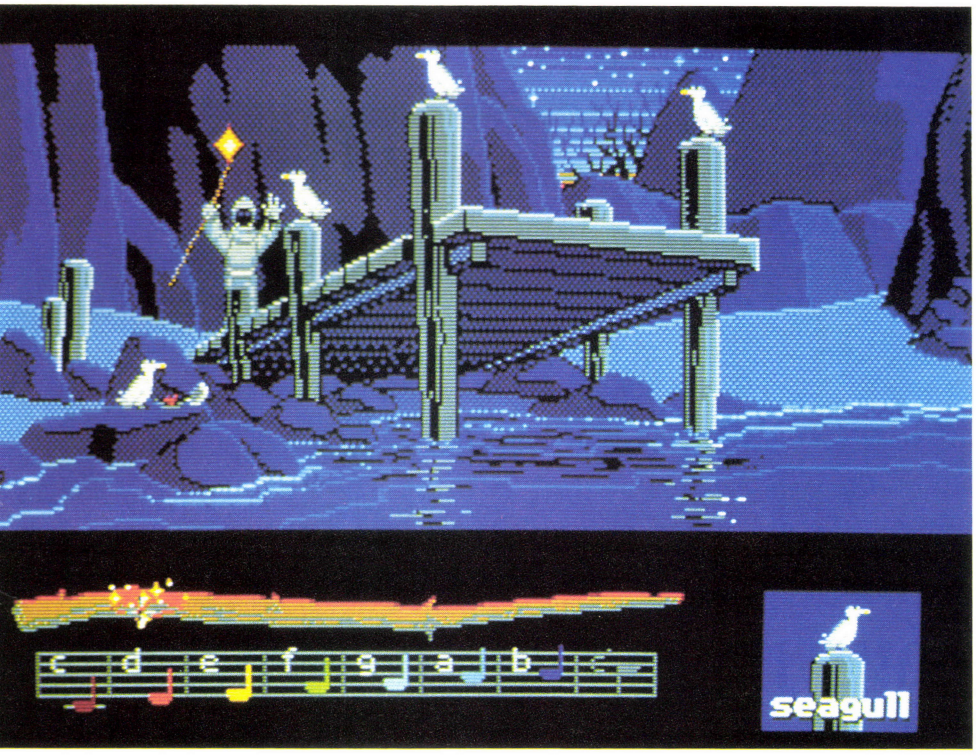
Then it went black....

"What, the...," I stammered.

"It's only a demo," Malone chuckled, knowing that he had me teased. "Better warm up your screen, Paperboy." And he walked away, patting his cohorts on the back and gesturing toward me.

Now I'm helpless to do anything else but sit at my desk, waiting for the mailman to swing by each day. "Maybe they'll get done with it soon," I say to myself, in an effort to justify my wasting away, accomplishing nothing in the meantime. But I think the mailman knows too. I think I saw him laughing as he left.

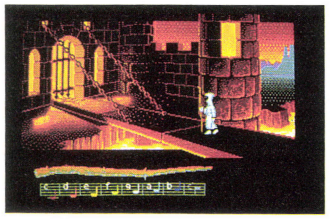
Hey, did his shoulder patch say "Origin" on it?



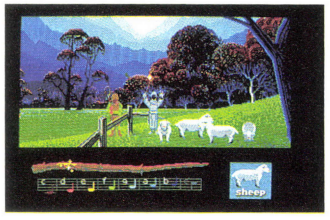
The game is fantasy. The interface is magic.

Alone on a craggy hilltop, high above an island shrouded in perpetual mist, your quest begins. But tread gingerly, because while the world of *Loom*™ is breathtakingly beautiful, unspeakable danger awaits the unsuspecting.

Trepidation soon gives way to bravado as you peek inside abandoned tents in the village. Stumbling over a discarded weaver's distaff, you watch in wonder as it gradually glows and resonates with a sequence of musical notes. Tentatively at first, you point the staff and repeat the notes. After considerable experimentation, you may discover the power to see in the dark. Or weave straw into gold. And eventually find the means to leave the island itself.



Not all the Guilds welcome strangers.



A spell weaver's power is not for the sheepish.

A fantastic odyssey ensues, as menacing waterspouts, merciless dragons and exotic cities draw you deeper and deeper into the fantasy. Armed with the distaff's magic power, you stride fearlessly across vast, cinematic landscapes. Seeking the arcane knowledge possessed by the Great Guilds, accumulated and refined since the dawn of time.

Typing is banished from this kingdom.

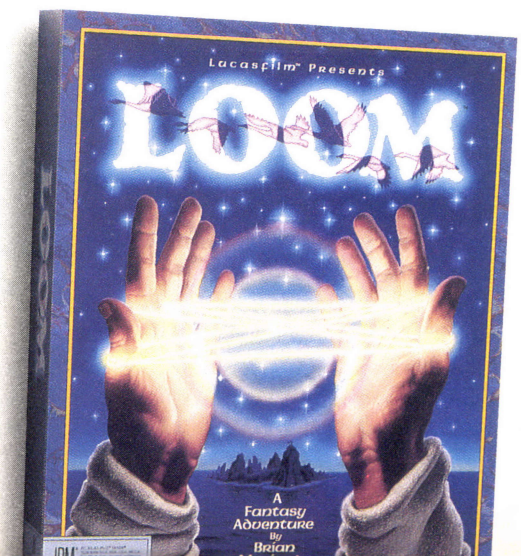
Loom is more than a masterpiece of fantasy storytelling. With *Loom,* Lucasfilm™ Games literally redefines the fantasy computer game experience. Simple point n' click actions move your character, select objects, and perform magic. No cumbersome keystrokes, text parsing, maze mapping, or inventory management intrude to break the spell.

We even transport you to the Age of the Great Guilds before you turn on the computer. With a lavishly produced, 30-minute drama on Dolby® Stereo audio cassette that's included with the game. Recorded by Lucasfilm's Academy Award-winning Sprocket Systems, it introduces the characters and sets the scene for the impending, epic struggle against imposing odds.

Then it's full immersion into *Loom*'s 3-Dimensional, scrolling panoramic landscape. Where detailed animation, high definition graphics, startling special effects and stirring musical score combine to create a total environment. Captivating you from the opening scene to the final climax.

And your quest for a truly magical fantasy adventure is finally realized.

LUCASFILM™ GAMES



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WINTER

COMPUTER-GAME



QUALITY UP, QUALITY DOWN

BY ARNIE KATZ, BILL KUNKEL AND JOYCE WORLEY

Computer games will be better than ever this fall and winter, but don't expect to find as many new titles on store shelves as in the last few years. Makers of computer-entertainment software have responded to 1989's across-the-board 10% sales dip by getting a lot more realistic about the market.

Publishers are now carefully tailoring their offerings to the actual demand. As a result, there were only about half as many titles on display at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago this year.

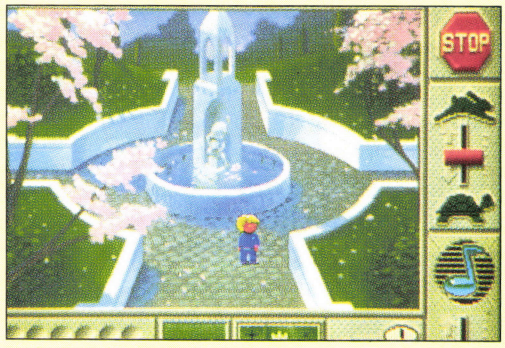
Lower quantity won't equal disappointment for compugamers, however. There'll be more exciting new games than anyone this side of Pierre DuPont could afford—and a lot less of the ho-hum product that plagued the field for the last two years.

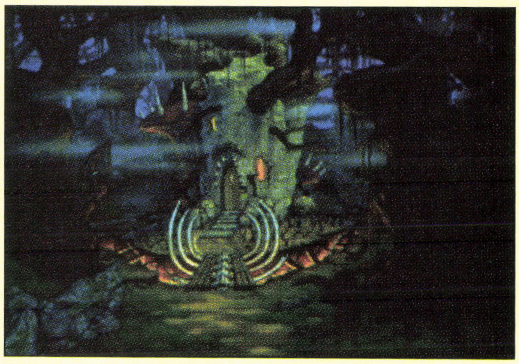
The big difference in the mix of new games is the greatly reduced number of British-designed titles. When sales jumped more than 25% annually in the 1986 -1988 period, it was only natural that game companies would want to take advantage of the expanding audience. Some of these outfits built huge management, sales and marketing teams, and they needed to feed the corporate monster to keep the bottom line in the black.

Unfortunately, most publishers didn't have the creative resources on tap to match the distribution pipeline's hunger for more games. They turned to foreign sources, especially the United Kingdom, for extra product.

It was a bad move. There are many talented designers and developers on the other side of the Atlantic, as games like *Populous* and many of the Ocean Software titles prove. Unfortunately, U.S. publishers failed to consider the essential differences between the U.S. and British game markets.

The relatively lower standard of living, youthfulness of the typical player and the scourge of software piracy combined make the U.K. a hit-driven market. Publishers sell product at rock-bottom prices and move it through the stores in a matter of weeks. Few games stay at the top of the British bestseller charts for more than a month to six weeks.





***Sierra's CD development includes* Mixed-Up Mother Goose and King's Quest V.**

As a result, British games are frequently generic, with little beyond hot play action to recommend them. They lack the fancy introductions, extensive documentation and other frills U.S. gamers take for granted and, therefore, are often perceived as "budgetware."

Companies have generally taken the cure from what many in the industry derisively call "Euro-crap." The best foreign-produced games still have a ready market in the United States, but, thankfully, those interminable side-perspective jumping-and-shooting contests will be missing this holiday season.

SYSTEM SHUFFLE

The free market economy has largely resolved the clamor for an "industry standard" computer for gaming. Though the Amiga remains highly popular with some players and the Macintosh has its gaming fans too, the computer-entertainment market has become largely an IBM PC universe. IBM PC and compatible games now account for more than 70% of all computer-game sales.

Remember 8-bit computers? Forget 'em! Retail sales of gameware for the Apple II family and Commodore 64 have dropped precipitously in the last 18 months, down more than 50% from 1988 levels. A few companies may buck the trend with an occasional title for one or both systems in fourth-quarter 1990, but shrinking distribution for all Apple II and C-64 software makes this less and less likely.

Virtually all game development now takes place on the IBM PC system. Cinemaware, Innerprise and a few other companies remain committed to the Amiga, and there are always a few

programs in development on the Macintosh, but these are exceptions.

LIVING IN CARTRIDGE COUNTRY

The overwhelming popularity of home video games, especially the NES, has profoundly affected computer gaming. Few software publishers feel strong enough to ignore the cartridge business. Some, like Electronic Arts, Virgin Mastertronic, Activision and Software Toolworks, are developing as many or more video games than titles for home computers. Even the ones who haven't gone this route—and there are fewer of those all the time—are trying to infuse their products with more exciting action and high-impact audiovisuals.

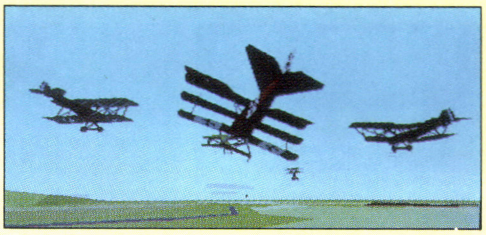
More and more products are crossing over from video game to computer, and vice versa. The 16-bit video-game consoles target gamers not too different from those who enjoy computer software, which makes transporting a game from one format to the other easier than ever.

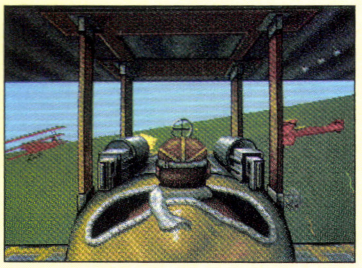
SENSATIONAL CD

Will CD be computer gaming's salvation? A lot of companies are betting that the answer is "yes." Enhanced sound, including human speech, video-quality graphics and much larger memory-storage capability are the advantages that publishers believe will make CD products a mass-market success beyond the level attained by conventional computer games.

Although no one expects a significant market for CD games to develop until at least 1992, several publishers are already developing titles to meet the expected demand when the IBM platform systems, fitted with CD drives, become widely available.

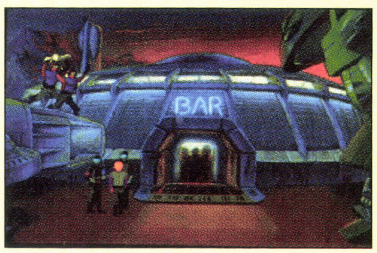
Sierra On-Line has produced a CD edition of its popular children's program, *Mixed-Up Mother Goose*, which provides a taste of what gamers can expect from CD products. Few adults would actually want to spend hours playing this simple adventure, but no one who has seen Sierra's demonstration can fail to be deeply impressed.





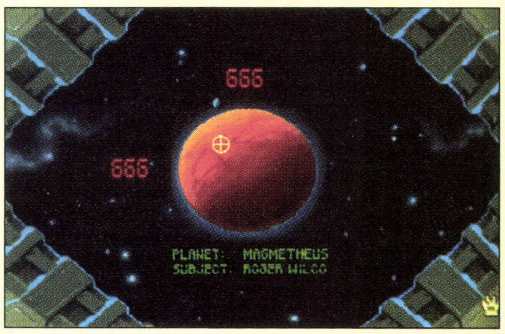
Dynamix's* Red Baron *(above) and Cinemaware's* Wings *(right) are hot simulators.

The user manipulates the on-screen characters, who must find various items scattered around the countryside and return them to their rightful owners. When one of the nonplayer characters receives the proper item, he or she performs a famous nursery rhyme.



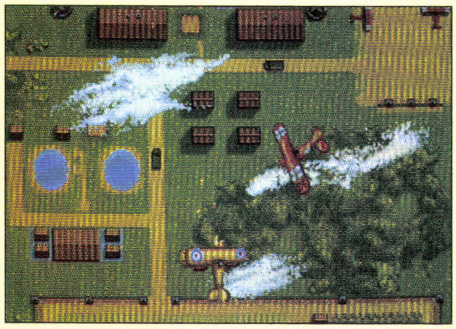
Left: Sierra's Roger Wilco returns in* Space Quest IV, *where he's chased by the sequel police.

Below right:* Stellar 7, *a mission to save Earth, comes back in modernized form by Dynamix.



The background scenery is reminiscent of Little Golden Books and the more ornate fairy-tale collections. The characters are intricately animated and move as fluidly as in animated feature films. Every character speaks with a human voice no less intelligible than a radio broadcast.

Sierra plans to do a CD version of Roberta Williams' forthcoming *King's Quest V*, as well as the standard computer editions. This game, which will reportedly wrap up the fantasy series, will explore the possibilities of the new medium much more thoroughly than the relatively simple *Mixed-Up Mother Goose.*



Access Software is another company now working on complex CD adventures, but the Utah-based outfit is also utilizing CD as a delivery system for conventional computer games. It has developed the first game compilation on CD disk. For a suggested retail price of $99, the buyer gets all of Access' hottest titles, including *Mean Streets* and *Crime Wave*. The games themselves are identical to the computer-disk versions, but having them all together at one low price is both cost-effective and convenient.

ACCENT ON ACTION

Sword of Sodan II (Innerprise for Amiga) is the follow-up to the best-selling arcade adventure on the Amiga published by Discovery Software two years ago. That company is gone, but the stellar development team lives on at Innerprise. The huge on-screen



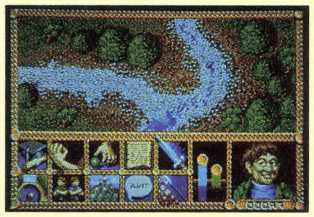
characters and vivid graphics are still present, but this time each level is packed with ten full screens of danger, and the hero or heroine moves in all directions instead of just left and right in a flat plane.

First came *Hybris*, then *Barrax Battle Squadron* and now comes *Aviators* (Innerprise for Amiga) to complete the action trilogy. First-person perspective, two-player split-screen action, stunning 3-D graphics and modem capability make this the greatest in a top-notch line of shoot-'em-ups.

A popular arcade game of the mid-1980s is coming back in a thoroughly modern edition. *Stellar 7* (Dynamix for IBM PC) puts the gamer in control of the Raven, a powerful craft that can even turn invisible to elude foes. The player must battle through seven stages of combat action in a do-or-die mission to save the Earth from alien conquest.

A very different game also heading back to market in an improved edition is *Oil's Well* (Sierra On-Line for IBM PC), a 1982 release for the Apple II family of home computers. This lighthearted arcade contest has a new graphic treatment, animated sequences between levels and a full soundtrack. When oil is discovered on your property, you've got to drill wells and keep envious wildcatters from ruining your operation.







At different points on the game scale are Epyx's* California Games II *(left), Interplay's* Lord of the Rings *(right) and Lucasfilm's* The Secret of Monkey Island *(below).

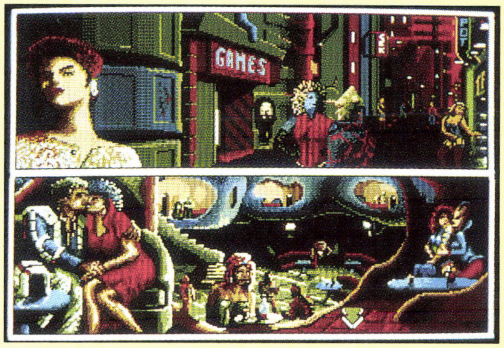
SIMULATORS: VICARIOUS VIDEO VISIONS

If 1989 was "The Year of the Tank," then 1990 could be "The Battle of the Biplanes." Several publishers intend to bring World War I flying simulations to market this fall and winter.

Wings (Cinemaware for IBM PC and Amiga) is exactly the kind of game you'd expect from this publisher, a role-playing simulation of life as a WW I aviator. The behind-the-cockpit viewpoint in the flying sequences is unique in the flying game category.

The Blue Max: Aces of the First War (360° Software for IBM PC) is named for the German medal awarded to World War I flyers who shot down 20 allied planes in combat. The gamer can pilot the most famous aircraft on both sides in a variety of missions from dogfights to balloon-busting. *The Blue Max* has the extra advantage of modem capability, handy when there aren't live opponents within easy reach.





***Left: Dynamix's* Heart of China.**
***Right: UbiSoft's* B.A.T.**

Lifelike 3-D graphics in 256 VGA colors highlight *Red Baron* (Dynamix for IBM PC). This flight simulator models the aviators as well as their planes, so the armchair pilot must match his or her skill against the greatest aces of World War I.

Glasnost comes to gaming in *Gorbachev's Ace* (Electronic Arts for IBM PC). Fans of modern air power have had a chance to vicariously fly most American planes, but this flight simulator provides the chance to zip through the skies in the hottest Soviet fighter, the SU-25, on secret missions to safeguard world peace. The design supports the AdLib sound board, has 12 external views and presents extensive scenery using polygon-fill graphics.

SPEAKING OF SPORTS

Bo Jackson Baseball (Data East for IBM PC), designed by Season Ticket, will be the first game to benefit from Data East's deal with *USA Today*'s Sports Center. Managers can download up-to-the-minute statistics and feed them into this action-strategy program to keep their league or solitaire season right up to date. Data East is revamping *Monday Night Football*, released about nine months ago, so that it, too, can make the Sports Center connection.

Three-on-three basketball is the next Season Ticket subject. *Dream Team* (Data East for IBM PC and Amiga) features competition against a squad composed of Patrick Ewing, Dominique Wilkins and James Worthy in half-court hoops. The icon-based interface makes it easy for players to utilize the innovative shot-selection feature while concentrating on moving the ball against a trio of dogged defenders.

MicroLeague Pro Football and *MicroLeague College Football* (MLSA for IBM PC and Amiga) will be ready for statistical-simulation gamers who want to run leagues and replays this season. Developed by Subway Software and Ed Daniels, in conjunction with MLSA's

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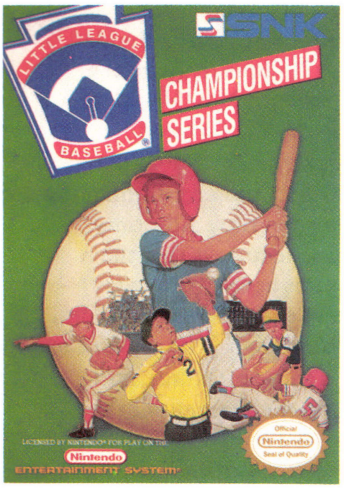
SNK: Serving the Game Players of the World since 1973

SNK COMES OUT WITH 4 NEW GAMES!

Little League Baseball: *Championship Series*

LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL! It's the game every kid in America loves to play . . . And now you can experience the fun and excitement of Little League Baseball at any time of the year, rain or shine, day or night — right in your own living room!

Create your own winning team of players with batting, fielding, pitching, and running characteristics you can tailor to your own specifications. Then challenge a friend or the computer to a world-wide Championship Series tournament.

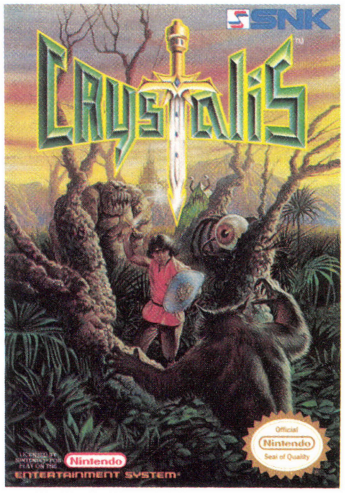


You are in full control of your players: Jump or dive for a tricky catch . . . Choose a full swing or a bunt for your batter . . . Shift fielders at will . . . Send in a pinch hitter or runner . . . Select a fast ball, slow ball, or curve ball for your pitcher . . . Steal a base if you dare . . . Or you might even try a squeeze play!

Little League Baseball has been an American institution for 50 years — and you can be a part of it. If you're a Little League fan or a Little League player — or if you ever wanted to be — here's your chance to go for the glory!

Crystalis

WHEN the Great War brought civilization as we know it to an end, it ushered in a new era of sorcery and magic. The magicians used their magic to keep peace for a hundred years . . . Until an evil magician named Draygon began to use his powers for conquest.



To combat Draygon, the other magicians constructed four swords of wind, fire, water, and thunder. Used together, they would transform into the mightiest weapon ever created: Crystalis. But Draygon seized the weapons and scattered them far and wide.

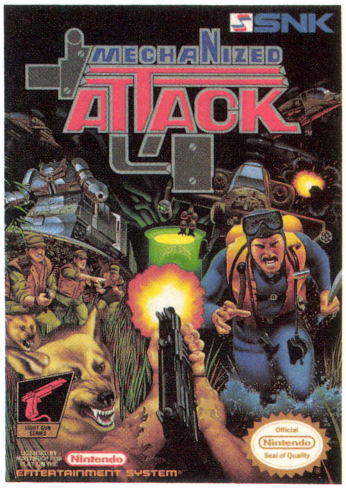
Only one hope remained: A young lad, himself a great magician, who had been imprisoned and frozen during the Great War. The magicians pooled all of their powers in an attempt to revive him. When the boy awoke, they had vanished, leaving him to find his destiny in this strange new world.

In CRYSTALIS, you play the role of the young magician, making your way through Draygon's hostile land in an effort to locate the weapons you will need to defeat him. Draygon's monsters and black magic will threaten you at every turn; but you must not falter — only you can deliver the world from his scourge of evil!

Mechanized Attack

AT FIRST, it looked like just another revolution. But reports have come in that the rebel forces are backed by an unusual array of high-tech weaponry — and that the rebel soldiers may actually be a fearsome new breed of fighting robots! If this revolution succeeds, the safety of the entire world may be threatened . . . And that's where you come in.

You must attempt to infiltrate the island base of the rebel forces. But before you even reach the shore, you'll have to contend with enemy gunboats, frogmen, choppers, and destroyers. The island itself is patrolled by enemy soldiers armed with machine guns, daggers and grenades; vicious attack dogs; and lethal airborne probes, programmed to destroy intruders on sight. And if you reach the rebel headquarters, you will face the most terrifying threat of all — only no one has made it back to reveal its nature.



Many unknown dangers lie in wait, but you'll be equipped with a complete arsenal — an assault gun, rocket launcher and grenades — to provide you with a fully mechanized system of attack. You haven't got a minute to waste — it's time to launch your MECHANIZED ATTACK!

Dexterity

DEXTER DOLITTLE has an amazing imagination! He can imagine himself to be anywhere he would like — including his many magic puzzle rooms.

Guide Dexter on his merry way as he jumps from tile to tile, flipping them over — while he dodges, blocks, and captures captivating characters of all shapes and sizes. Some of his magic puzzle friends can be changed into fabulous fruits. Find the hourglass, hammer, and magic heart to gain bonus points and extra imaginary rooms. But watch out for the scary skull, which can stop Dexter short before he finds the delectably delicious ice cream worth 5000 points!



You won't find more fun and fantastic haphazards in any other Game Boy cartridge as you will in these 30 nimble-fingered, fast-paced rounds of Dexter's dubious imagination.

So find the magical key to unlock the door to not only Dexter's, but your own wonderful imagination!

SNK

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246 Sobrante Way
Sunnyvale, California 94086

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Jim Nangano, these titles combine extensive animated visuals with exacting simulation. The company will also market additional team disks to widen the range of available teams.

The Carver brothers can't stay away from the electronic links. The folks at Access Software who designed *World Class Leader Board* are preparing an advanced gold simulation for IBM PC computers fitted with VGA graphics capability.

"With the high resolution of VGA graphics, the hills will look like hills, and the bunkers will look like bunkers," explains Access' Steve Witzel. The forthcoming product, as yet untitled, also gives the gamer exceptional control over all phases of their swing, including the backswing, acceleration of the downswing and the wrist snap.

California Games II (Epyx for IBM PC, Amiga and C-64), the long-awaited sequel to 1988's wacky sports compilation, should reach consumers during fourth quarter 1990. The new disk showcases five wild events: snowboarding, jet-ski racing, bodyboarding, skateboarding and hang gliding. Graphics and sound are even better than the original, which got high marks from players in both areas. (Epyx also plans an NES version of *California Games II*, probably in early 1992.)

A real bargain for fans of action-strategy sports contests is *Games Series Complete* (Epyx for IBM PC and C-64). It's a compendium of all four famed Epyx titles—*Summer Games, Summer Games II, Winter Games* and *Winter Games II*.

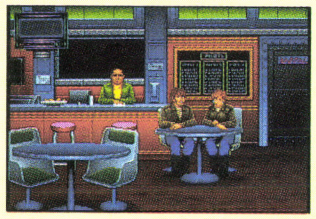
PATHWAYS TO ADVENTURE

Adventure and role-playing games continue to proliferate, with publishers marketing everything from illustrated text epics to icon-driven, interactive graphic quests. Science fiction and fantasy remain the favorite themes but adventure and mystery are definitely gaining acceptance.

The most exciting news for fantasy fans is that there will be twice as many *Ultima* games as in the past! Greg Malone of Origin Systems tells VG&CE that besides the ongoing series by Lord British there will be a parallel line under the *Worlds of Ultima* umbrella.

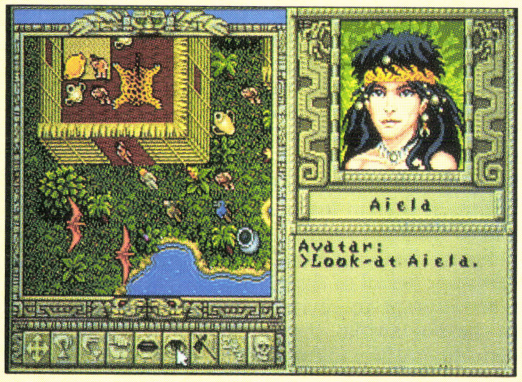
These adventures capitalize on the idea of the Moon Gates, the space-time portals introduced in *Ultima*, to take gamers to new worlds within the *Ultima* universe. The first title on the schedule is *Savage Empire*, and it should be available in time for holiday gift-giving. After that, *Worlds of Ultima* will alternate with the original series. The idea is to introduce an improved game system in each *Ultima* and then use it to do the next *Worlds of Ultima* title too.





From the fairy-tale world of Virgin Mastertronic's Wonderland (above) to the fantasy land of Origin Systems' Worlds of Ultima (right).

J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* has appeared in game form, officially and unofficially, several times, with varying degrees of success. *Lord of the Rings, Volume I* (Interplay for IBM PC and Amiga) promises to be a feast for fans of the world's greatest fantasy epic. The gamer employs an icon-based control system to explore Middle Earth in this role-playing adventure derived from the first of the books, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Sophisticated plot construction mirrors the overall storyline while allowing computerists to explore aspects of Tolkien's world not covered in the trilogy. Frodo can even recruit members for the Fellowship who didn't take part in the quest described in the novel!



Worlds of Ultima *takes gamers to new lands in the* Ultima *universe.*

Wonderland (Virgin Mastertronic for IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST) proves that illustrated text adventures are not dead. It introduces a much more extensive parser, point-and-click options that speed play and intricate illustrations for all major locations. The Magnetic Scrolls game utilizes windows, pull-down menus and other convenient features that allow the player to fully concentrate on assuming the role of Alice in the Lewis Carroll story.

Seventeen villains have stolen the King's scepter, hidden it and divided the map into 17 pieces to guard the secret. *King's Bounty* (New World Computing for IBM PC) has three levels of difficulty and random initial placement of clues to make finding the missing trinket fun time after time. One interesting feature is that the player does not have to kill every monster he or she meets in this John Bancaneghan design. The player can buddy up to these creatures, and some will add their strength to the party.

Fans of *Cyborg* and *Tass Times in Tone Town* should be pleased by Michael Berlyn's newest science fantasy, *Altered Destiny* (Accolade for IBM PC). A freak accident sucks P.J. Barrett, the protagonist, into an alternate universe, where he must find a creature bewitched by a baleful jewel. *Altered Destiny* employs an updated and strengthened parser that requires the gamer to enter typed commands.

Roger Wilco is back again in *Space Quest IV* (Sierra On-Line for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Macintosh), and

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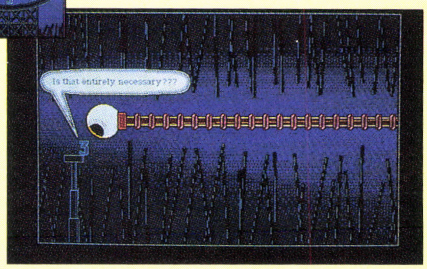
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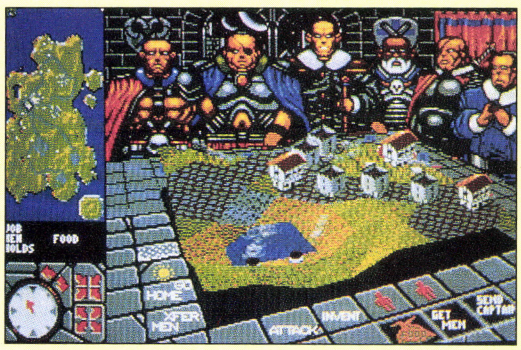
the sequel police are after him! The Two Guys From Andromeda team has never been zanier than in this interactive graphics adventure, in which the heroic janitor meets such exotic characters as the Latex Babes and the Time Rippers.

The enemy is capitalism run amok in *B.A.T.* (UbiSoft for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and C-64). In the 22nd century, the Galactic Confederation has exiled Earth's industrial leaders to the planet Selenia to prevent them from creating an oligarchic dictatorship. The evil genius Vrangor plans to destroy the population of Selenia with bacterial weapons. The safety of this once peaceful world depends on the player, an agent of the Bureau of Astral Trouble-Shooters, in this science-fiction action-adventure.





Blade Hunter: Rise of the Dragon (Dynamix for IBM PC) is a 21st-century detective story. It uses a point-and-click adventure interface, plus numerous arcade sequences, to follow the hero's adventures as he tries to solve the toughest case of his career. Artwork and animation are especially strong in this science fiction mystery.



Above: Cinemaware's 3 in Three.

Left: Electronic Arts' Powermonger.

Below right: Brøderbund's Galleons of Glory.

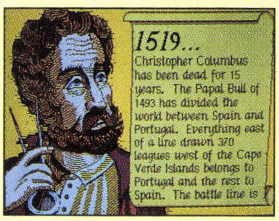
Cartel (Access Software for IBM PC) takes its name from an unholy alliance between movie executives, smugglers and drug lords that rules a near-future Los Angeles. Former New York cop Lucas McCabe is supposed to be on vacation in "La-La land," but the disappearance of an old girlfriend propels him into a war against the corruption of the organization known as "The Devil's Triangle."

International intrigue takes center stage in *Countdown* (Access Software for IBM PC). Mason Powers learns about the secret plans of a terrorist group in this interactive graphic adventure, but he's plunged into a nightmare world of double crosses, violence and power politics as he tries to thwart the rogue group's sinister scheme.

A young lad finds adventure in the West Indies in *The Secret of Monkey Island* (Lucasfilm for IBM PC). Humorous elements contrast effectively with spine-tingling thrills as the player is tangled in a plot concerning voodoo cannibals. Graphics are breathtaking, and the menu-driven system keeps play moving at an appropriately fast pace.

Revolutionary China of the 1930s is the setting for *Heart of China* (Dynamix for IBM PC), high adventure for home computers. The computerist becomes "Lucky" Jake Masters and, using point-and-click commands, tries to rescue the kidnapped daughter of a wealthy American. The artwork has a unique look, much more shadowy and atmospheric than most adventure titles. The cinematic presentation is further enlivened by real-time action sequences at important points in the story.





Billy the Kid (Ocean Software for IBM PC and Amiga), an action-adventure, is one of the few role-playing games based on the legends of the Old West. As Billy or Sheriff Pat Garrett, the computerist can draw down in gunfights, rob (or protect) trains, meet sinister card sharks and do all the other things familiar from hundreds of movie and TV Westerns.

Steve Cartwright, best known for action-oriented contests, is the author of *Les Manley in Search of the King* (Accolade for IBM PC). Les Manley is a television reporter who embarks on a search for the world's greatest entertainer in this pop culture quest. The gamer guides Manley's search for clues to the identity of "The King" by typing in commands.

SPOTLIGHT ON STRATEGY

Peter Molyneux, designer of VG&CE's 1989 Computer Game of the Year, *Populous*, is back with *Powermonger* (Electronic Arts for Amiga), and the new title looks even better than last year's smash. In this multiplayer contest, players assume the leadership of a tribe that must negotiate, trade and fight its way to control of a previously unexplored world. It uses a system derived from *Populous*, but the objectives are more clear-cut, and *Powermonger* could easily eclipse its predecessor in popular appeal.

Galleons of Glory (Brøderbund for IBM PC) is a quasi-educational adventure-strategy contest that chronicles the world-girdling voyage of Ferdinand Magellan. In a game that faintly resembles Ozark Softscape's *Seven Cities of Gold* and *Heart of Africa*, the player becomes the renowned explorer and must face all the logistic and personnel problems that bedeviled Magellan on his historic journey. Multiple difficulty levels allow the program to increase in challenge as the user gains proficiency.

What's even more fun than removing an electronic appendix? Brain surgery! That's the focus of *Life & Death II* (Software Toolworks for IBM PC), the follow-up to the same publisher's 1989 medical strategy title. VGA graphics make it possible to closely study every phase of these delicate operations, and there's online help for would-be

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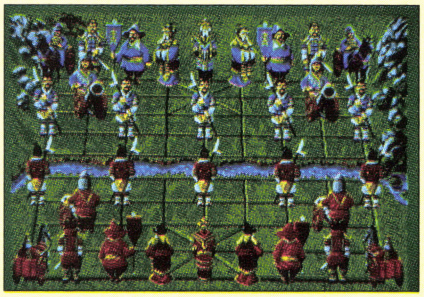
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surgeons who need a little expert advice at critical moments.

Those who've recovered from their visit to Hazard Park (in *Puzzle Gallery*) can limber up their wits for *Puzzle Gallery II* (Miles Computing for IBM PC, Amiga and Macintosh). It's called *Miles Across America*, and puzzle-solvers face a new set of challenging conundrums every step of the way.

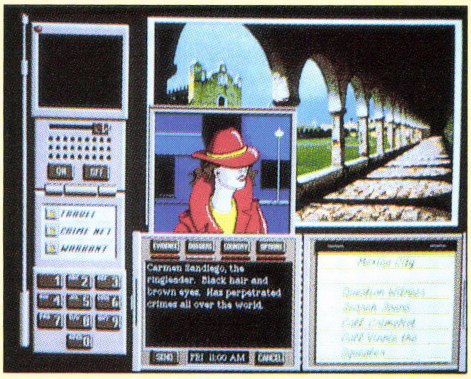
Puzzle Gallery fans should also take a look at Cliff Johnson's *3 in Three* (Cinemaware for Macintosh). This engaging fantasy about what *really* goes on inside the dark innards of a computer presents 60 scenes incorporating 90 Johnson brainteasers. Each solved puzzle opens up new possibilities, but the overall construction is said to eliminate the frustration of game-stopping dead-ends.

Spot: The Computer Game (Virgin Mastertronic for IBM PC) stars the animated symbol of the Seven-Up Company in a game reminiscent of *Reversi*. This fascinating strategy game goes far beyond the conventional disk-flipping game, however. The user can customize it in a variety of ways to suit personal taste or simply plug in one of the more than 500 variations provided on the disk. What some may consider the year's most unlikely licensed product is a real charmer packed with addictive play value.



Above: *Interplay's* Battle Chess II.

Below: *Brøderbund's* Carmen World Deluxe.

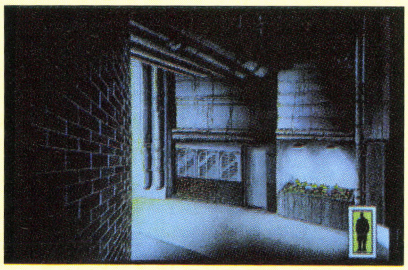


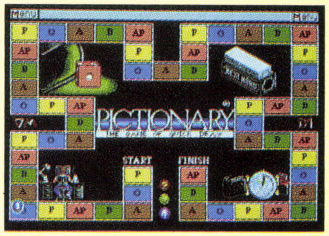
Battle Chess II: Chinese Chess (Interplay for IBM PC and Amiga) does for the ancient Oriental strategy contest what *Battle Chess* accomplished for the European classic. It embellishes a rock-solid Chinese chess algorithm with incredible sound, graphics and animation. The movement and capture sequences are, if anything, even more outstanding than in *Battle Chess*. The sequel gives players the opportunity to experiment with a vastly different board and several new pieces, like cannons, ministers and counselors.

One of the best nonelectronic board games is on its way to home computers under the Accolade banner. *Stratego* (Accolade for IBM PC, Amiga and Macintosh) is the classic hidden-piece contest by Milton Bradley. Sam Nelson is producing this title, which allows one or two players to enjoy an exact simulation of the nonelectronic game or create new boards and pieces for a customized version. The inclusion of a robot adversary justifies *Stratego* all by itself, because the board game can't be played with two human participants.

Below left and bottom: *Dynamix's* Blade Hunter: Rise of the Dragon.

Below right: *Brøderbund's* Pictionary.







Pictionary (Brøderbund for IBM PC, Amiga and C-64) brings the nonelectronic "Game of Quick Draw" to home computers in a program developed by Britain's Domark. It plays like charades, except that players "draw" words instead of pantomiming them. *Pictionary* is playable against the computer, in teams or solitaire. The participants can either draw pictures or have the program generate them for everyone to identify.

The *Carmen Sandiego* series is the most successful line of "edu-tainment" computer products. Now Brøderbund will offer *Carmen World Deluxe*, which updates *Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?* (Brøderbund for IBM PC) to current state-of-the-art. Among the many improvements in this expanded edition are an increased number of cities, twice as many clues and more detailed graphics, including digitized location drawings and characters who talk with digitized speech.

THE FORECAST

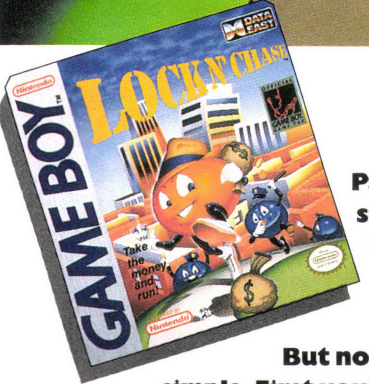
Nothing shakes up an industry like shrinking sales, and computer-game publishers are reassessing their operations in light of competition from video games and the CD revolution. The 1989 overexpansion will result in a smaller number of new titles this year.

Many publishers tried to introduce fast-action contests last year to compete head-on with Nintendo. It turned out to be a poor strategy, because computerists are simply not a good market for games that depend on reflex speed.

Forthcoming games will battle cartridges with outstanding audiovisuals, intuitive interfaces and big-ticket licenses. The content is split between "classic simplicity" like *Tetris* and "rich complexity" like *SimCity*. Expect fewer coin-op-style computer games, but more action elements in titles that emphasize strategy.

The overall quality of computer games has never been higher than it will be this fall and winter. If holiday season shoppers agree, it could provide the boost many publishers need into the CD-dominated electronic-gaming market of the mid-1990s.

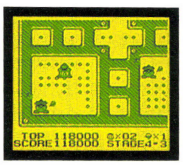
CRIME DOES NOT PAY

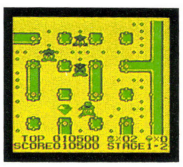


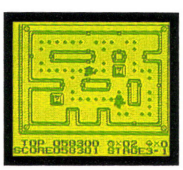
Payday has arrived! The streets of this city are lined with cash and filled with diamonds. All yours for the taking.

But not so fast. It's not that simple. First you've got to find the loot. And that's not all. You've got to be fast. *Very* fast. Because the police are right behind you. And they're out to do what the Boys in Blue do best—stop you cold.

Each street is a surprise, and no two routes are the same. You'll need all your skill to make it through multiple mazes, each one completely different and more challenging than the last. Expect some nonstop action through six a-maze-ing levels of play!







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INSIDE GAMING

TEN HOT GAMING TRENDS

BY ARNIE KATZ

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. In this issue Arnie looks at the major trends that will shape electronic gaming.

The Winter and Summer Consumer Electronics Shows are the most important events on the electronic-gaming industry's calendar. Some of the reasons for this are pretty obvious: Chain and discount-store buyers can evaluate new product lines, publishers can court distributors and the press and journalists can see all the new stuff in one reasonably convenient, if numbingly hectic, place. And, of course, every CES is an orgy of deal-making. Agreements hammered out in a few frenzied minutes in a display-booth meeting room decide who gets to design and develop the new video and computer games and who will take that part-time house-painting job.

CES is important for other reasons that are almost as pivotal but more subtle. CES helps the people behind the games stay in touch with each other. It's the place to discover rivals' marketing plans, swap good and bad news and figure out the prevailing trends.

Folks complain about the crowding, the placement of the booths, the hardness of the convention centers' concrete floors, the unpredictable Illinois weather and everything else you can imagine. It doesn't stop them from heading to Vegas in January and Chicago in June, though. They complain incessantly, but they still load up those planes.

I haven't missed one of these semiannual gatherings since I started going in 1981. I've muddled through Consumer Electronics Shows with a sprained ankle and with laryngitis. I even missed my delightful niece Michelle's bas mitzvah rather than skip the 1988 Chicago show.

Trend-spotting was a favorite pastime at this year's summer CES. Electronic gaming is in flux, and developments unveiled at the show will determine the near-future course of the entire video- and computer-gaming hobby.

The crystal ball is warmed up, so let's take a look at these major forces:

• ***Increased Competition***—When sales rise, new business keeps all but the greediest companies happy. It doesn't take a genius to make money in an expanding market. That's the way things were in 1988, when Nintendo spread-eagled the video-game field, and computer-game software rose 25%.

The honeymoon is over. Publishers who confidently predicted double-digit gains are fighting hard for survival, especially in the "soft" computer-game market. Distributors have shrunk space allotments for computer games, so the fight for available spots is fierce.

Even video games aren't a sure thing. Sales growth is negligible, and units-per-title are a fraction of the 1989 totals. Smart cartridge-makers are tossing track records out the window, because everyone expects to have to work much harder for success this Christmas season. And no one is issuing optimistic forecasts for the rest of the year. There will be 8-bit video games that don't sell and quite a few others that won't even reach store shelves.

• ***Uncertain Consumer Demand***—The transition from 8- to 16-bit is far from complete. There is no guarantee that all, or even most, of the 28-million NES and SMS owners will buy Genesis, TurboGrafx-16 and/or Super Famicom hardware. History suggests that it will be hard for manufacturers to pull more than 25% of the audience through such a major change. A reduction in audience size would dictate sweeping changes in sales and marketing, since it would make saturation a lot less effective.

Publishers are cutting the fat out of their product lines and their payrolls. Automatic success is gone. Look for more creative marketing and some high-risk product moves aimed at breaking companies out of the pack and giving them high-profile identity.

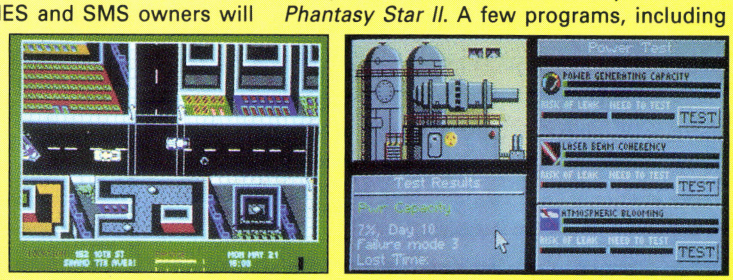
• ***Modem Capability***—Telecommunications has grown rapidly in the computer field, but the main inspiration is the Nintendo Game Boy. Its success has made linking for multiplayer contests a hot concept.

Computer-game companies figure that if people like playing across a room, they'll enjoy competing against someone across the country at least as much. Heavy ownership of this peripheral makes it reasonable to aim products at modem users. Companies like 360° Software are incorporating modem capabilities in as many products as possible. *Armor Alley*, for example, even lets computerists play on any combination of Macintosh and IBM PC machines.

The arrangement between Data East and *USA Today* Sports Center is also of historic importance. Expect more crossovers between gaming computer networks this year.

• ***Licensing***—A strong license is a sure way to make a game stand out on the shelves. The high cost of acquiring properties once kept a rein on spending, but now other trends encourage it. Mergers and multinational development deals have put more companies in position to spend big bucks, as have tie-ins between video and computer games. Companies can afford to pay more for licenses that go multimedia. Some of the year's hottest new titles are *Champions Forever* (NEC), *Dick Tracy* (Sega/Disney), *Cardinal of the Kremlin* (Capstone), *Elvira* (Accolade) and the *Seven-Up Spot* (Virgin Mastertronic).

• ***Multimedia Publishing***—The line between video and computer games has blurred, as it did in the early 1980s. Computer titles like *Shadowgate*, *Ultima* and *Tetris* are big hits in cartridge form, and now we'll see a lot of video games heading to disk too. International Development Group, which has translated coin-ops like *Outrun* for home computers, plans to do the same for top carts like *Phantasy Star II*. A few programs, including



Two of this year's biggest games, Sega's* Dick Tracy *(left) and Capstone's* Cardinal of the Kremlin *(right), benefit both from the fact that they are licensed titles and the publicity which follows that.

IN 1972, AN ELITE AIR CORPS FLEW OVER VIETNAM. FLY WITH THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD.

Feel the adrenaline kick in as you scream down the carrier runway. You're up! And so is your squadron of F-4's. Now nothing can stop you —except the deadly fire from those MiG 21's, SAMs and anti-aircraft flak.

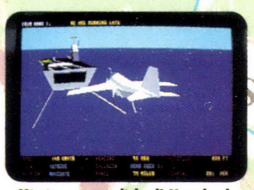
Experience the raw emotion and harrowing danger of intense air combat over North Vietnam in this simulation based on Stephen Coonts' best-selling novel, *Flight of the Intruder*. Authenticated by Vietnam pilots who flew in the Linebacker Campaign of 1972, you won't find any other simulation so like the real thing.



Off you go to adventure, danger and excitement.



Zero in on the MiG, before he zeros in on you.



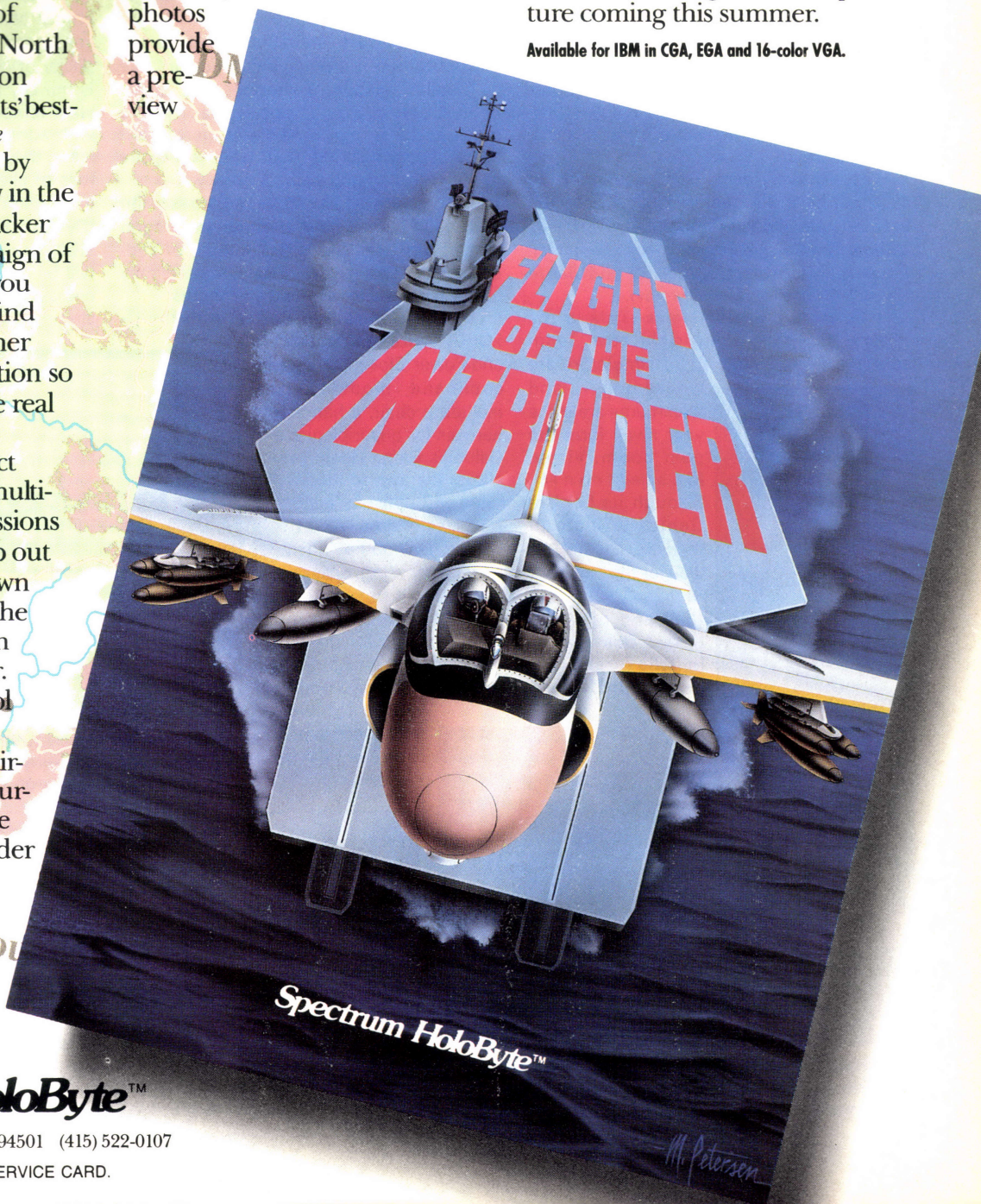
Mission accomplished! Now back to Yankee Station to plan your next attack.

Select from multiple missions or map out your own using the mission creator. Control up to eight aircraft during one mission (four A-6 Intruder bombers and four F-4 Phantom fighter interceptors.) Switch from the A-6 to F-4 cockpit anytime.

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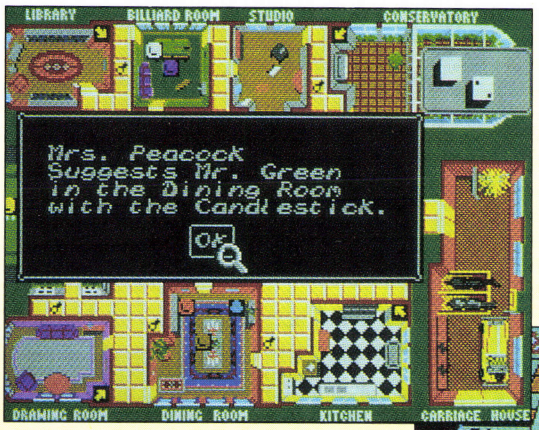
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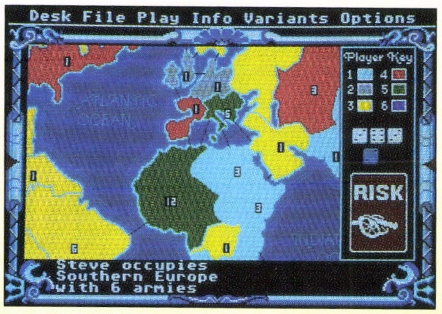
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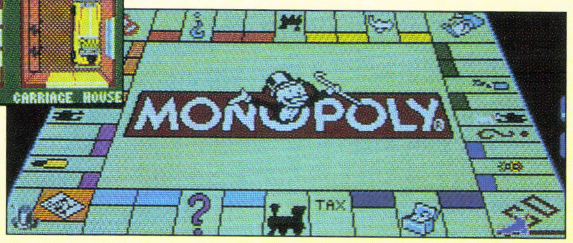
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Tengen's action-strategy *Klax*, are coming to market simultaneously as video and home computer games.

• ***Multisystem Video Game Publishing***—The day of the exclusive NES publisher is ending. The NES business can't last forever, so looking-to-the-future companies are widening their focus to include other systems that might develop into big profit centers in 1991. Fear of antitrust prosecution has caused Nintendo to relax its control a little, and this has given once-servile third-party publishers maneuvering room to cut deals to make software for other systems. Contract restrictions will keep most existing NES titles exclusive, but new contracts are filled with escape hatches for outfits that want to spread the cost of developing a new game over as many machines as possible.





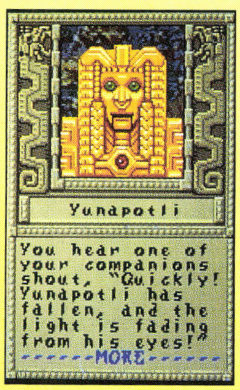


Clue *(left)*, Risk *(above right)* and Monopoly *(below right)*, from Virgin Mastertronic, are good examples of computerized board games.

• ***Sequels***—If it works once, it'll work twice. That seems to be the logic behind the tremendous number of sequels. Computer-game publishers have had so many duds in the last year that they want to hang on to the live ones. Some of them, like *Faces* (Spectrum Holobyte), *Balance of the Planet* (Accolade) and *SimEarth* (Maxis) will test this theory to the limit.

Virtually every game that made money in 1988 will have a sequel in 1990. Among the best bets are *Aviator* (Innerprise), *Worlds of Ultima: The Savage Empire* (Origin Systems), *Powermonger* (Electronic Arts) and *Battle Chess II Chinese Chess* (Interplay).

• ***Electronic Board Games***—This is the hottest category going right now. Team sports are now "out," flight simulators are weakening and adventures are still a year away form the next boom. Virgin Mastertronic, through its Leisure Genius affiliate in the U.K., has led the way for the "in" with *Monopoly*, *Clue* and *Risk* and plans to release *Quasar* within the next six months. Brøderbund is readying *Pictionary*, GameTek continues to turn TV game shows into electronic board games, MicroProse has *Railroad Tycoon* and Parker Brothers is offering *Trivial Pursuit*.



Modem capability will increase the appeal of electronic board games this year. They're much easier to play when each participant has a separate screen than when everyone has to crowd around a single display.

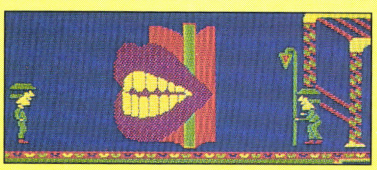
• ***Accessorizing the NES***—The surest sign that video games have become an integral part of American life is the number of add-ons soon to be available. Play-enhancers may be the big trend for the next six months.

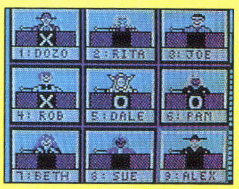
Special controllers started with the U-FORCE, wireless controllers and Power Glove, but special-command modules now include a chair, a hands-free harness for quadriplegics and Galoob's Game Genie (which allows the user to modify the rules and difficulty factors of NES cartridges. As of this writing, Galoob has a temporary restraining order on it preventing it from selling the product). Other accessories include lights for the Game Boy, a arcade-machine-style cabinet for the NES and Software Toolworks' MIDI touch-sensitive Miracle keyboard instrument.

• ***Rediscovery of the Classics***—The huge impact of *Tetris*, *Arkanoid* and *Shanghai* has convinced publishers that the elegant simplicity of classic video and computer games is the key to today's market. Primitive hardware forced early designers to create games with addictive play action. Though easy to learn, they stood up to repeated play with no loss of challenge or excitement. *Stellar 7* (Dynamix) and *Oil's Well* (Sierra On-Line) will be among many neo-classics released starting this winter.

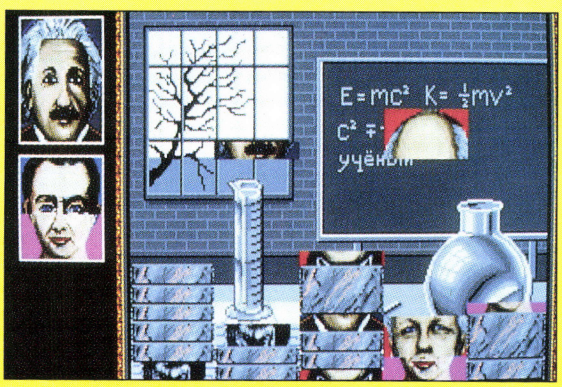








Pictionary *(above left)*, Quasar *(above right)*, Double Dare *(bottom left)* and Hollywood Squares *(bottom right)* are other licenses soon to appear on game screens.



Origin System's Worlds of Ultima: The Savage Empire *(top)* and Spectrum Holobyte's Faces *(bottom)* are sequels that are destined for success.

FANDOM UPDATE

Electronic-gaming fandom lives! I've been receiving a steady stream of amateur newsletters and magazines, and next issue's column will be devoted to reviewing some of the most interesting.

If you've been hanging back, waiting to see what happens to the first few fanzines, now's the time to jump into the action. Why let everyone else have their say about new games? Let fans know how you feel by distributing a fanzine! Doing a small publication isn't a snap, but it's nothing most game fans can't handle. And the rewards more than justify the effort. Publishing a fanzine lets you air your opinions, and it's a great way to meet others who love electronic gaming as much as you do.

One thing that certainly makes doing a fanzine easier is the list of fanzine readers available on request from me for a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you'd like to see some sample fanzines, you can have your name added to this list by sending me your name and address.

Joyce Worley, Bill Kunkel and I are still offering a sample copy of *Megagaming*, a newsletter for hard-core video- and computer-game fans, for $1 to Katz Kunkel Worley, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

ALL THE FUN OF REAL STUNT RACING WITHOUT THE BRUISES

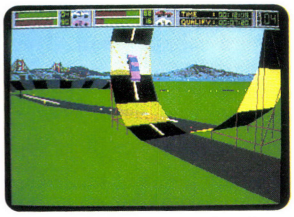
Road etiquette? Forget it!

Get ready for the wildest, most daring stunt driving experience this side of Hollywood. Slip behind the wheel of this classic '66 Shelby Mustang and buckle up for chills and thrills. You'll soon be zipping through the loop-the-loop, twisting through a corkscrew jump, and flying over death-defying ramps.

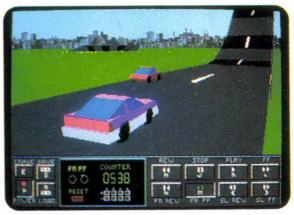
To add to the frenzy, there are other aggressive competitors trying to nudge you off the road, cut you off at a jump, and generally damage your Shelby beyond repair. The excitement escalates as you advance in level of difficulty and take on more challenging courses. With five pre-designed courses and a "construction editor" which allows you to create your own, you'll never tire of the thrill of the chase.



Down shift and hit the gas! You'll need plenty of speed to clear that open drawbridge!



You can almost feel the gut-wrenching G-forces from the loop.



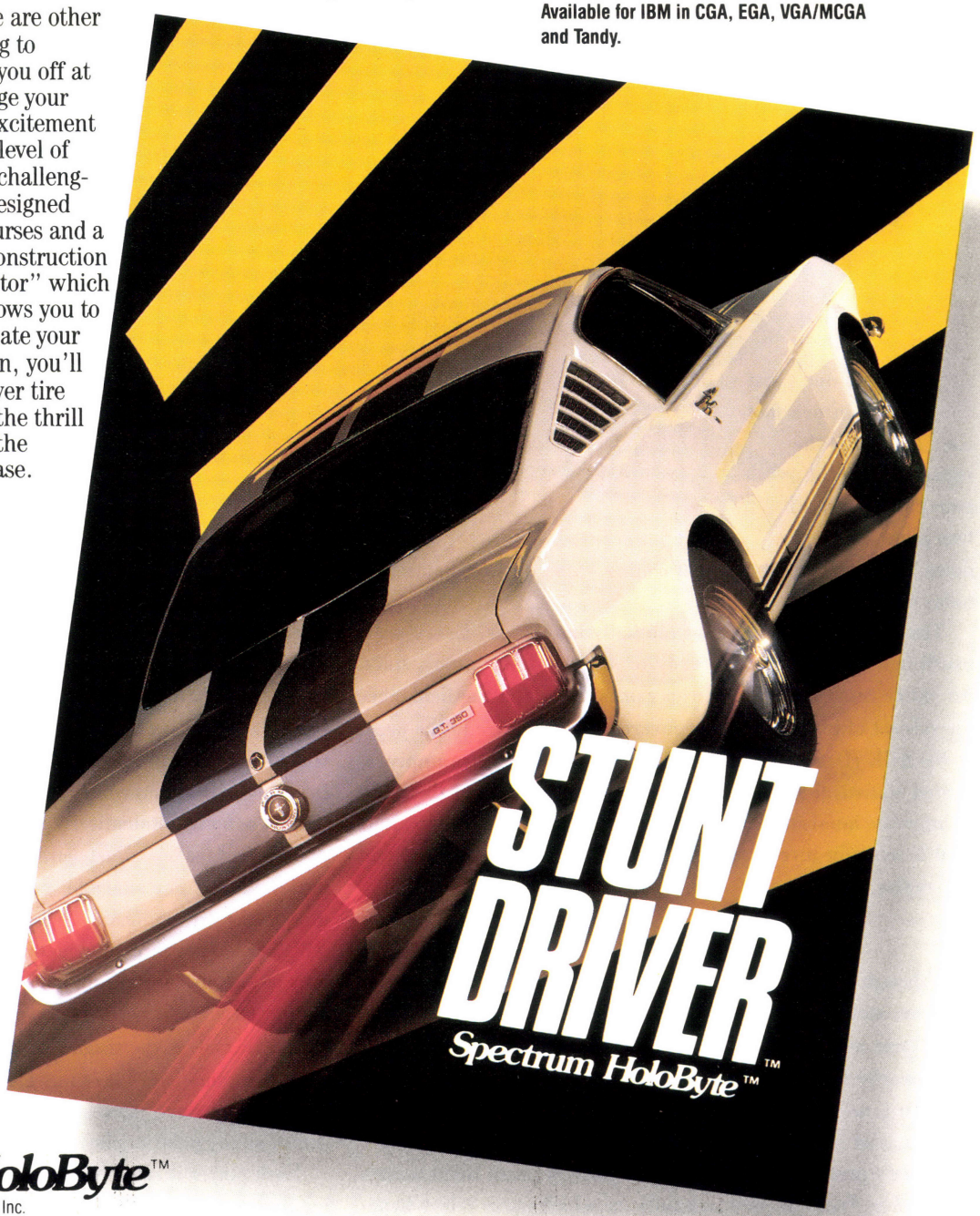
The recorder mode plays back the action from numerous camera sites.

And when you're ready for the big thrill, hook up head-to-head and race against a buddy on another computer.

Multiple view perspectives allow you to see from any angle. Recap all the excitement with the video instant replay. In VCR mode you can rewind, fast forward, pause and view frame by frame. For those sequences you want to review at a later date, save to disk and load them as you desire.

With amazingly realistic 3-D graphics and true-to-life sounds, Stunt Driver delivers all the action of real stunt driving. Everything, that is, but the bruises. So grab your helmet and race to your favorite retailer to be first at the starting line for Stunt Driver!

Available for IBM in CGA, EGA, VGA/MCGA and Tandy.



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Spectrum HoloByte™

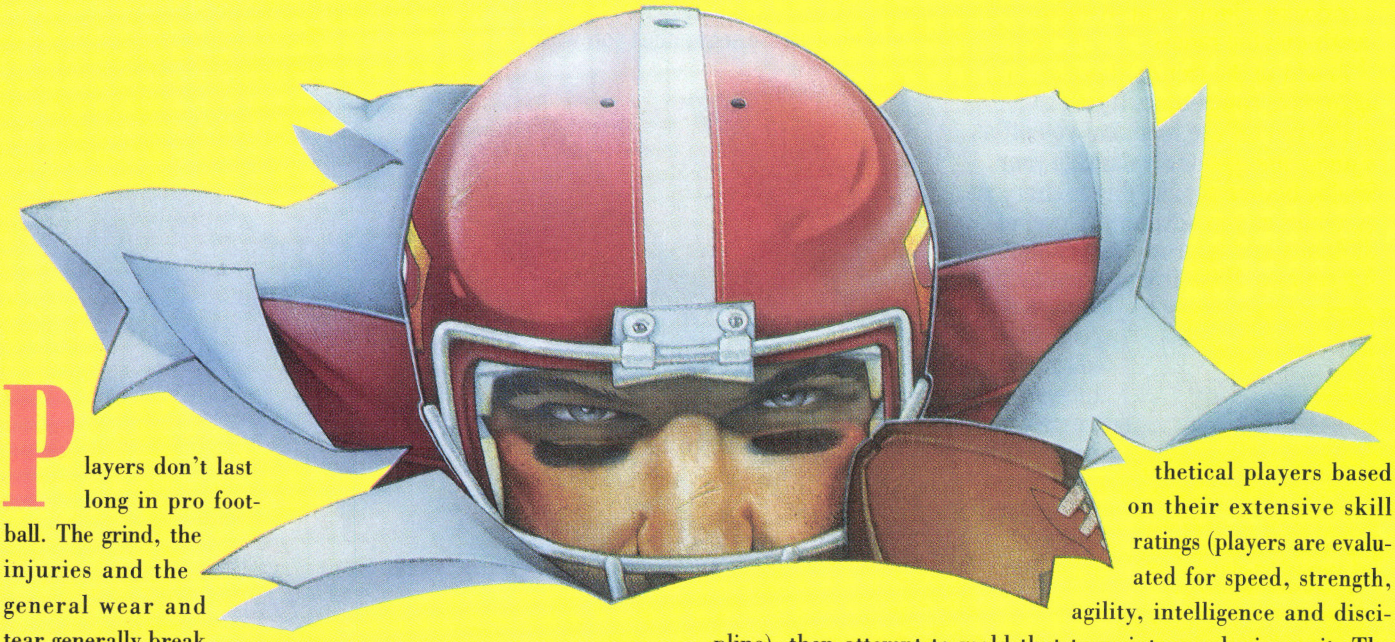
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Semi-Tough!

ELECTRONIC FOOTBALL ENTERS THE '90s

by Bill Kunkel and Arnie Katz



Players don't last long in pro football. The grind, the injuries and the general wear and tear generally break down the human body, transforming yesterday's all-star into today's old timer.

The same has been true of football simulations. Every year, brash new rookies appear, ready to displace last season's stars. An entire generation of gridiron games has taken the field since the subject of football was last covered in depth here in the pages of VG&CE (December 1988). The new games feature unprecedented statistical sophistication, amazing graphics and the latest in interface innovation. Just like their forefathers, however, they tend to come in three basic flavors: strategy, action-strategy and stat-replay.

Master of Strategy

Although all strategy football games employ statistics, they differ from stat-replay simulations in that they do not use actual NFL teams and players. The point of these games is not to coach your favorite team or players but to fashion a winning team as combination general manager and coach. This is done by putting together a solid team and then designing plays for that team to run.

Today's premiere strategy football game is Brian Brinkmann's *PlayMaker Football* (Brøderbund), in which users select hypothetical players based on their extensive skill ratings (players are evaluated for speed, strength, agility, intelligence and discipline), then attempt to mold that team into a cohesive unit. The game contains pre-drafted teams or the user can create his own squad, along with an accompanying playbook for each team. Thereafter, each new situation invokes a corresponding menu of possible plays, which are run on a top-down, vertically scrolling gridiron.

The game even features an audibles option. Each team playbook can have up to three plays designated as audibles, after which they can call that audible at any point once the team on offense has moved to the line of scrimmage.

The defense automatically tracks each team's leading offensive players and makes adjustments in its defensive coverage based on performances. For example, linebackers assigned to key on running backs will automatically key on the opposing team's hottest RB. There is even a commentary option that provides play-by-play as well as constant updates of passing yardage, passes (completions/attempts), net yards, penalties (number/yards) and total yards. In fact, if the transcribe option is employed, all play-by-play is automatically saved as a text file, which can be accessed through any word processor. Games can also be saved and resumed at any point in play.

Each player is represented by a bubble gum-type card containing his name, position and uniform number. Accessing your file

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT ERNSTER

brings up a more detailed player screen that tells whether the player is first, second or third string, along with a full set of player skill ratings, represented as horizontal bar graphs.

Teams constructed by *PlayMaker Football* can be tested in the computer vs. computer mode, where the program calls all plays for both teams (the user can fine-tune the strategic artificial intelligence for each team). Or, the user can be coach, calling plays (as in a stat-replay game) and sitting back to watch the results. Finally, the on-the-field mode lets the user directly control the QB, ball carrier and, on defense, the middle linebacker.

One of the game's strongest features is its chalkboard editor, an easy-to-use option that lets gamers create new plays or modify existing ones. Once a play is designed, the user can try it out on the practice field, where both teams automatically line up according to the chalkboard plan, ready to run the play over and over to reveal any possible weaknesses in the strategy.

One of the strengths of football strategy games is that they are "pure," that is, uncluttered by perceptions of the abilities, or lack thereof, of existing NFL players. Because the players in *PlayMaker Football* are not real, they don't come with any emotional baggage and can be evaluated exclusively on the basis of their ratings. On the other hand, most gridiron fans are as attracted to the personalities of the various NFL teams and players as they are to the game itself. For that reason, there are generally only a small number of pure strategy football games.

Replay the Pros!

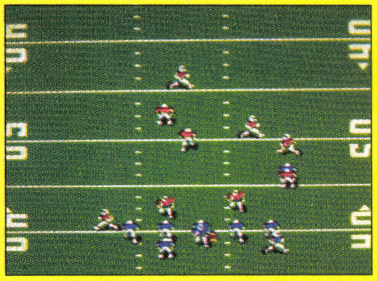
The most popular form of football strategy contest is the stat-replay, in which gamers get to call the plays for existing NFL teams and players. These games require the publisher to make deals with both the NFL (for use of team names and logos) and the NFL Players Association (for the player names).

Pure-Stat Football (Software Simulations) is the successor to the classic *Super Bowl Sunday* (Avalon Hill). When Quest, the development group responsible for *Super Bowl Sunday*, broke up, designer/programmer Ed Daniels formed Software Simulations. He created and published *Pure-Stat Football*, where users select formations, call plays and designate key players through a series of menus, then watch as the play is run on-screen and the results are assessed. Users pick the play formation first, then make selections off a series of menus cued to the initial menu choice.

Pure-Stat is playable in computer vs. computer and one- or two-player modes. Users adjust the length of quarters and can even turn off the graphic mode in order to speed up play. The game includes ten great all-time teams, including the '64 Browns, '68 Jets, '72 Dolphins, '75 Steelers, '76 Raiders, '84 49ers and '85 Bears. As with most stat-replay football contests, the user must purchase a separate general-manager utility disk in order to hold drafts. There are also stat compiler, team and season disks available that interface with the original program.

Daniels has since gone on to collaborate with the Subway Software design group and produce *MicroLeague Football* (MicroLeague Sports Association), a state-of-the-art, fully animated stat-replay contest due out this autumn.

One of the strongest new entries in the stat-replay sweepstakes is Antonick and Madden's *John Madden Football* (Electronic Arts), a game that started as a pure strategy game and entered the stat-replay universe courtesy of the recently published *NFLPA Players Disk* (EA). The Apple version, which first appeared several years ago, was seriously flawed, but subsequent editions shored up most of the original program's weaknesses to produce a solid, expert grid simulation.





A game that started as a pure strategy game and became a stat-replay entry, EA's* John Madden Football *is a quality version of computerized football.

Field type (turf or grass) and conditions, weather, injuries, fatigue, substitutions and detailed player ratings all figure into the mix. Strategic nuances, such as the ability to "cheat up" in order to better defend against the run, help give this simulation an extremely high level of sophistication. In addition to the standard formation and play-calling options, *John Madden Football* lets the user take more control than a coach over the quarterback. Pressing the "H" (for "hero") key just prior to the snap allows the gamer keyboard or joystick control over the QB. There is also an "umph bar" that gives players a brief burst of explosive speed.

Run blocking, pass blocking, traps and kicks can be assigned as "group tasks" and, as in *PlayMaker Football*, *Madden* has chalkboard and practice field options for designing and practicing new plays. Madden himself periodically appears as a guiding force, and his personality is evident in every nook and cranny of this program.

While the initial program did not include real NFL teams or players, *John Madden Football* now qualifies as a stat-replay game, thanks to the *NFLPA Players Disk*. It contains ratings for all 45 players on each of the NFL's 28 teams for the '87 and '88 seasons. This add-on disk also features 81 new plays, including a 3-4 defense and 20 new trick plays for the offense.

Graphics here are workmanlike, using a vertically scrolling, slightly angled top-down perspective as well as a behind-the-goalpost "stadium" viewpoint for certain situations. Traditionally, strategy and stat-replay games emphasize their statistical soundness rather than their visual appeal. In fact, some stat and strategy games offer no graphics at all.

Lance Haffner's *3-in-1 Football* is a full-scale college and pro simulator for one-player, two-player or computer vs. computer play. Gamers can choose from 14 offensive plays and six defensive formations, call time-out and employ a two-minute drill. This program includes an incredible 500-plus college and pro teams from the past and present, and new disks are being released on a regu-

lar basis. The game also includes a stat compiler and provides a fairly complete end-of-game scoring summary.

Additional disks include a standings and league leaders program and a draft/trade/change ratings utility. While Lance Haffner's self-published sports simulation does not offer graphics, the astonishing number of teams and the college-or-pro option gives it advantages that no competing program can touch.

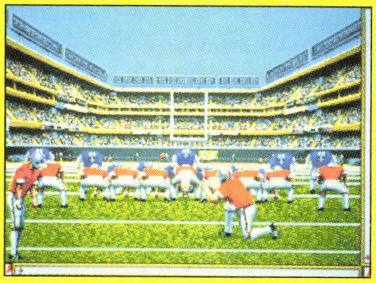
Dave Holt's *NFL Pro League Football* (Micro Sports Inc.) doesn't offer fancy play animations, but it does boast a striking visual presentation as well as rock-solid statistical and rating underpinnings. Boxed in a classy and attractive package, *NFL Pro League* offers gamers two *billion* different play combinations; radio-style play-by-play; weather conditions; league, head-to-head or solitaire play; three seasons worth of NFL teams and players; and a sophisticated stat-keeper utility.

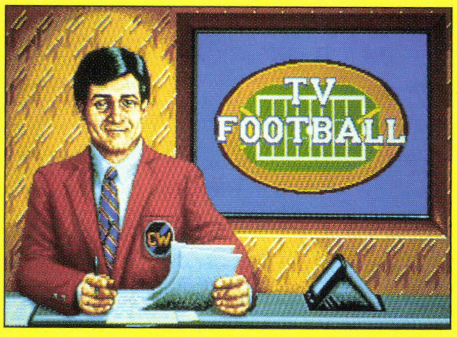
The stat keeper compiles post-game stats in 140 categories; charts league standings; maintains season files on each team with 200 categories. It contains a 70-category league record book, a league-leader sorting utility and scouting-report generator, as well as an auto-game plan generator comprising 440 million game-plan combinations. There's even a play-by-modem option.

Gamers draft from a pool of over 1,200 players using the pro-draft feature, which also offers the league-leaders utility, a sort program that sifts stat files in rushing, passing, receiving, kicking, punting, punt returns, kick returns, tackles, sacks, interceptions and other categories.

The visual presentation is unique. The screen breaks down differently on different system versions, but each version includes a stat window and on-field display comprised of animated X's and O's. EGA/VGA IBM and Macintosh versions also include a special animated on-the-field display that shows the referees and linesmen in action. Also featured are renderings of the appropriate helmet for each team (*NFL Pro League* has deals with both the NFL and NFLPA).

Micro Sports will be supporting this product with additional disks, including an NFL Head-Up Football utility for head-to-head play. A college version of the game should also be available by the time you read this.





Cinemaware's* TV Sports: Football *is quickly becoming a classic computer football game and will soon appear on NEC's TurboGrafx-16 game system.



Let's Scrimmage!

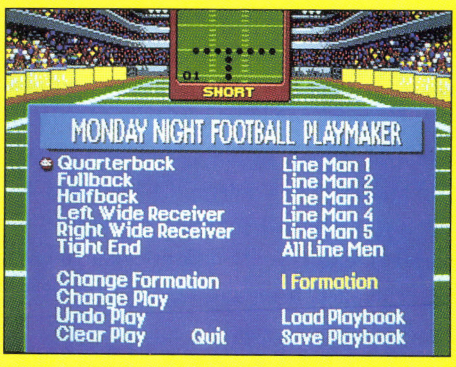
Since the dawn of the age of electronic entertainment, action-strategy has been the most popular category of football simulation. Virtually all video football games and more than half of all computer gridiron games are action-oriented, with varying degrees of strategic sophistication.

At the high end of strategic content there's *TV Sports: Football* (Cinemaware), which goes so far as to actually include a strategy-only mode in which the user calls plays then watches as they are run. Most players will opt for the action mode in which they call plays then execute them via direct control over the key players.

As with all Cinemaware games, the graphic presentation of *TV Sports: Football* is strong. The primary display is a vertically scrolling, angled, top-down presentation with alternate camera angles for special situations, such as field-goal attempts. The on-field players are unusually large and well-animated, and there are numerous visual frills, such as the halftime show and TV studio updates. (A video-game version of *TV Sports: Football* is currently being readied for the NEC TurboGrafx-16.)

Season Ticket's *Monday Night Football* (Data East) offers a similar presentation but strives to create a more streamlined player interface. Designer Scott Orr wanted to create a game that users could get into without a lot of fuss and setup. Underneath the main display, which employs a vertically scrolling, angled, top-down perspective, a horizontal row of helmet icons appear. Each of the helmets represents a player (QB, halfback, fullback, left wide receiver, tight end and right wide receiver), and once the ball is snapped, holding down the appropriate command key causes a highlight to scroll from one helmet to the next. Releasing the command key picks the highlighted player as the target of the pass.

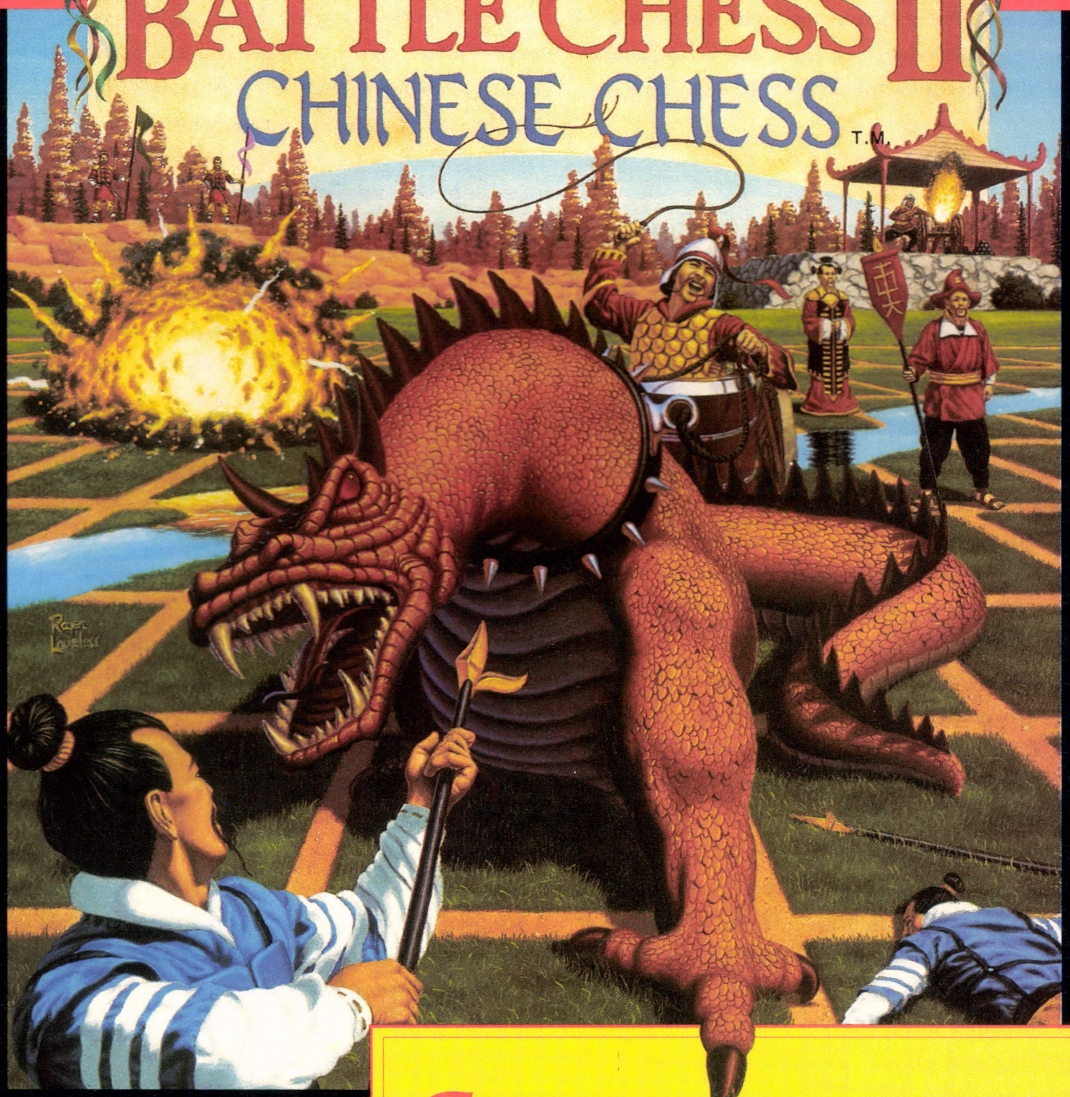
MNF also features the expected visual frills associated with its license. Frank Gifford and company are seen and heard frequently (thanks to solid, software-based speech digitization). Additional graphic screens also add to the realism. This includes a 50-yard line screen against which the scoreboard and play options are displayed and a behind-the-goalposts display for field-goal attempts. Referees and linesmen appear in pop-up windows when necessary.



Data East's* Monday Night Football *is being revamped to include an interface to the* USA Today *stat database.

An NES version of *Monday Night Football* is scheduled for release by Data East, as is an updated computer version of *Monday Night Football (Version*

BATTLE CHESS II
CHINESE CHESS T.M.







Actual IBM Screens Pictured

Cannons thunder, chariots race over grassy fields, and dragons hurl fireballs at opposing forces in the latest animated strategy game from Interplay Productions. Battle Chess II: Chinese Chess™, an ancient cousin to western chess, features stunning graphics, realistic sound effects, and more humorous animation than the original Battle Chess™. Watch as dragons toast hapless knights, counselors flatten pawns with enormous mallets hidden in their robes, and cannons merrily blast away at opponents cowering behind other pieces. Some of the many features included in Battle Chess II: Chinese Chess are:

- A Strong Chinese Chess algorithm
- 2D & 3D viewing modes
- Multiple levels of difficulty
- Take back and replay moves
- Play by Modem
- Recommends best move
- Show legal moves

With Battle Chess II: Chinese Chess, chess is no longer an abstract mental exercise. It is an entertainment that will prove the words of the famous Oriental Philosopher/Chef Kung Pao who said "War is fun!"

To order Battle Chess II: Chinese Chess, call 1-800-969-GAME. Available on MS-DOS for $49.95. Amiga Coming Soon.

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Interplay™

Interplay Productions
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Santa Ana, CA 92704
(714) 549-2411

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1.5). The 1.5 version of *MNF* will interface with the new *USA Today* stat database being introduced in Data East's *Bo Jackson Baseball*, which will allow users to upload current team stats onto their *MNF* disk.

Action Please!

At the farthest end of the action-strategy spectrum are computer games such as *Street Sports Football* (Epyx), *Street Football* (Capcom) and *John Elway's Quarterback* (Melbourne House) and video games including *NFL* (LJN), *Tecmo Bowl* (Tecmo), *John Elway's Quarterback* (Tradewest) and *Mike Ditka's Big Play Football* (Accolade).

Street Sports Football and *Street Football* both try to simulate the kind of touch-tackle pigskin played for generations by American city kids. *Street Sports* puts some extra creativity into the process, adding objects such as garbage cans and manholes into the play, whereas *Street Football* runs a fairly straightforward game down an uncluttered street, with trash cans representing the goal posts.

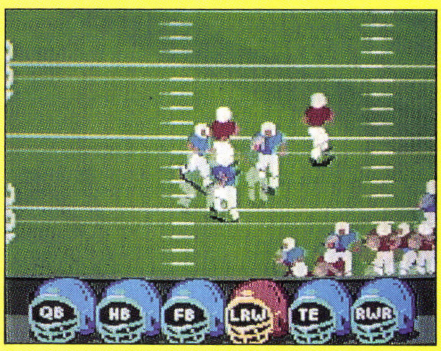
John Elway's Quarterback was a hit in the arcades (from Leland), on computers (from Melbourne House) and in video-game format (Tradewest). It's easy to see why: The graphics are attractive, while the play action and interface stress ease of play. One or two players engage nine-man teams in this vertically scrolling, top-down contest with nine offensive and six defensive setups.

Gamers looking for an action-oriented football game that uses real NFL teams haven't got a lot of choices. *NFL* (LJN) is billed as the "only officially licensed NFL game" for the NES. Gamers select from a complete roster of NFC and AFC squads, then attempt to go all the way to the Super Bowl. Players are rated by position with position upgrading and player-handicapping features available. *NFL* even has penalties, audibles and wind effects!

The look of *NFL* might be called neo-classic in that it departs from the current vogue of vertically scrolling, top-down graphics instead opting for the old horizontally scrolling, top-down view with the players seen, essentially, in side view. Thanks to the improvement in modern graphics, the players are not flat, two-dimensional figures moving against a screenlike field, but fully articulated, animated characters. There are also close-ups during kicking and pop-up windows whenever an official needs to signify a penalty or touchdown.

The next major NES football game looks like it will be Accolade's *Mike Ditka's Big Play Football*. Created by the Japanese-based Pony Canyon group, *Mike Ditka's Big Play Football* took most of its inspiration from Accolade's *4th & Inches*, one of the most popular action-strategy computer football games. It employs the same angled, horizontally scrolling grandstand view as the earlier game and offers solitaire or head-to-head play and a choice of six teams (not real NFL teams). The game's most innovative feature is a passing option whereby the player can freeze the game just before passing in order to scan and evaluate the status of each of the two eligible receivers. Once the receiver is selected, the game is un-frozen and play continues.





***Top: LJN has brought the NFL to the Nintendo Entertainment System in* NFL.**

***Bottom: Data East's* Monday Night Football.**

Unusual Entries

Although not actually a football *game*, one of the more offbeat stat-based programs is MBI Software's *Dream Team Fantasy Football*, which helps the user set up his or her own Fantasy Football league. The menu-driven software provides users with everything to start a league but the players, including team kits as well as an NFL historical player database, an invaluable aid in the team-selection process.

If traditional gridiron contests no longer get your blood up, how about football played by an assortment of gnomes, orcs and undead? If that concept turns you on, we recommend *Grave Yardage* (Activision), a strategic football variant similar to the nonelectronic board game *Blood Bowl*. Imagine the sport of football rediscovered by a post-holocaust society comprised of every manner of monster. Each species of creature brings its own strengths and weaknesses to the table and the results are often quite compelling.

Then there's the football of a mechanized, high-tech future in *Cyberball* (Tengen), based on the popular Atari coin-op. In this futuristic pigskin simulation, a variety of heavily armored and motorized players make today's footballers look like sissies. The graphics utilize an angled top-down viewpoint in this action-strategy contest.

Hold a Stadium in Your Hands

The recent portable game revival made the appearance of a new generation of hand-held football games inevitable. Konami recently broke the ice by announcing both a standalone unit and a Game Boy football cartridge. *NFL Football* is the name of both, and both have NFL licenses.

The Game Boy version includes all 28 NFL teams and full 11-player team action for one or two players (using the videolink cable). Several other third-party publishers have also discussed the possibility of producing football programs for the Game Boy but none have been announced as of press time.

Football's popularity in the real world may rise and fall, but in the electronic entertainment world, it remains one of the most dependable subjects for simulation. Whatever the format, from coin-op to computer, with all stops in between, football continues to gain electronic ground.

continued on page 156

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continued from page 154

The Electronic Footballography

The following is what we believe to be a complete list of football computer and video games. It is inevitable, however, that games will fall through the cracks, and any additions would be greatly appreciated. Games are listed in an approximation of their order of release.

Computer Games

Star League Football (Gamestar) Scott Orr's ground-breaking action-strategy game mixed a top-down, horizontally scrolling view of the gridiron with side-view players.

Cypher Bowl (Artsci Inc.) Vertically scrolling contest for the old Atari 8-bit computers was short on graphic sophistication but offered some solid game play, including 256 offensive- and defensive-play variations.

Computer Football (SSI) Earliest stat-replay football simulation. No graphics (just X's and O's), but a solid statistical base. SSI offered numerous team and season disks.

Tuesday Morning Quarterback (Automated Simulations) Similar to *Computer Football*, but less successful. Stat-replay gridiron simulation using real NFL players with chalkboard-style graphics superior to *Computer Football*'s but still extremely thin by contemporary standards. (Automated Simulations later became Epyx.)

Touchdown (AKA *Touchdown Football*) (Imagic) One of the best action-strategy football games of all time. Imagic's *Touchdown* was the first gridiron simulation to use a realistic, 50-yard line perspective. The program was later purchased by Electronic Arts and re-released on various 8-bit computer systems as *Touchdown Football*.

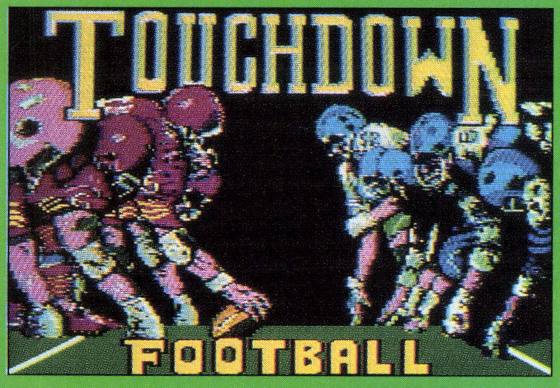
On-Field Football (Gamestar) Gamestar's second take on an 8-bit action-strategy football game offered superior graphics, easier play mechanics and vertical scrolling.

GFL Championship Football (Gamestar) Gamestar's most ambitious 8-bit pigskin simulation offered a unique on-the-field perspective. The technology wasn't quite up to the concept, but *GFL* is, nonetheless, a compelling and innovative play experience.

Football (Atari/cartridge) A large play selection with an unusual depth of running plays was this game's major distinguishing factor. Employs a traditional top-down/side-view display.

Computer Football Strategy (Avalon Hill) Cartridge game for the Atari 8-bit computers in which 18 all-time great teams can play one another in stat-based "what if" simulations. Weak play animation uses large, blocky figures, with no more than three players on-screen at any point. For several years this was only available on the TRS-80, but in 1984 AH released the Atari computer version.

The World's Greatest Football Game (Epyx) Strategically oriented gridiron simulation that was over the heads of most players when it was released in the mid '80s. Extremely sophisticated program was just too complicated for most users. Offered many features (like a create-your-own-playbook option) that were later expanded in games like *John Madden Football* and *PlayMaker Football*.



Imagic, an extremely popular game developer in the early '80s, created Touchdown, *a game that later was acquired by Electronic Arts and released as* Touchdown Football *for some 8-bit computer systems.*

Super Bowl Sunday (Avalon-Hill) The first stat-replay football simulation to use real NFL players and fully animated action sequences. Users select plays, formations, etc., from a series of menus, then sit back and watch as the play is run. An easy to play, but statistically sophisticated program from Quest.

Football (subLogic) Hybrid stat-influenced action game by Quest. Angled side perspective with horizontal scrolling was hurt by the fact that subLogic didn't purchase the rights to use real NFL players and seemed to have no idea how to market a stat-based sports game.

Pure-Stat Football (Software Simulations) When Quest's two main partners, Ben Reardon and Ed Daniels, split up, Ed Daniels went on to form Software Simulations, developer and publisher of *Pure-Stat Football*. This stat-replay game using NFL players and teams is basically an updated and improved version of the classic *Super Bowl Sunday*.

John Madden Football (Electronic Arts) The football equivalent of EA's *Earl Weaver Baseball*, *Madden Football* is an extremely sophisticated stat-based simulation using NFL teams and players. Weather conditions, custom play design (chalkboard), audibles and draft capability are among the game's outstanding features. The first extra seasons disk ('87/'88 seasons) is already available (*NFLPA Players Disk*).

TV Sports: Football (Cinemaware) State-of-the-art football simulation that can be approached from almost any direction, from arcade to stat-replay. The vertically scrolling gridiron graphics are outstanding, as are the numerous other special TV-style displays.

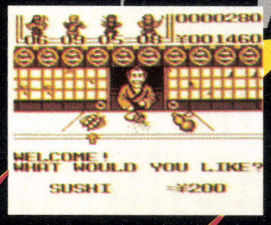
Street Sports Football (Epyx) Part of Epyx's "Street Sports" series, *Street Sports Football* takes the pigskin action to the streets, where ordinary objects become part of the game.

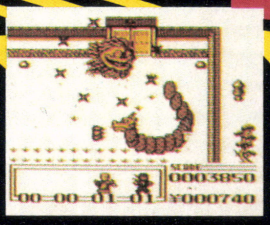
Street Football (Capcom) Neighborhood-style touch football played by three-man teams fill this offbeat arcade sports contest. Angled overhead viewpoint similar to *Street Sports Football*.

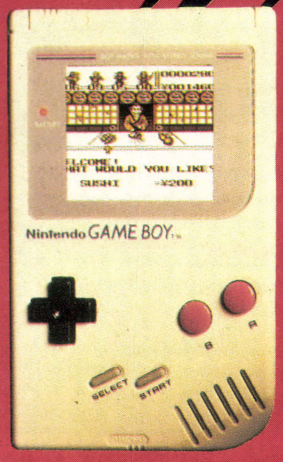
Mac Pro Football (Avalon Hill) Sophisticated football stat simulation for the Macintosh by Dave Holt features 40 past and present NFL teams. The emphasis is on play selection, with sim-

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ple but effective graphics (employing a combination of top-down and side views). One of the game's strong points is that it gives the coaches plenty to do—each play breaks down into a series of nine decisions on offense and ten on defense.

Pro Football Facts & Predictions (Intracorp) Not a game but a football database that allows users to look back on, analyze and evaluate previous NFL seasons.

3-in-1 Football (Lance Haffner Games) One or two-player statistical replay with end-of-game scoring summary; individual player stats for QB, rushers, receivers, kickers and kick returners; stat compiler; and over 500 teams. The game's only weakness is its lack of play graphics.

4th & Inches (Accolade) Solid, extremely popular action-strategy game. Play calling, formations and special plays are easy to select and the action is easy to follow, thanks to the realistic angled side perspective. Similar to *Touchdown.* A *4th & Inches Team Construction Disk* is also available.

Dream Team Fantasy Football (MBI Software) Software designed so that users can create their own fantasy football league. Includes an NFL player database.

Grave Yardage (Activision) Football played with ogres, gnomes and other fantasy creatures. Obviously inspired by the British board game *Blood Bowl.*

John Elway's Quarterback (Melbourne House) Excellent version of the Leland Corp. coin-op. Vertically scrolling top-down graphics stress easy play.

Monday Night Football (Data East) Scott Orr's Season Ticket development group (including sports game veterans Troy Lyndon and Michael Knox) produced this impressive action-strategy simulation. An innovative interface makes playing this top-down, vertically scrolling game a breeze.

PlayMaker Football (Brøderbund) Brian Brinkmann's sophisticated strategy game gives users tremendous latitude in creating and coaching their own teams. Does not use NFL teams or players.

NFL Pro League Football (Micro Sports Inc.) From a statistical point of view, this is one of the strongest gridiron simulations ever produced. Extremely detailed—is two billion different play combinations enough for you?—with league, head-to-head and solitaire modes. Uses real NFL players and teams. The visual presentation mixes a slickly animated X's-and-O's display along with an on-the-field window in which we see the officials fixing the line of scrimmage, calling infractions, etc. Created by Dave Holt, who produced *Mac Pro Football* earlier.

Cyberball (Tengen) Football in a mechanized, high-tech future, based on the Atari coin-op. Players in heavily armored and even motorized chassis engage in heavy duty gridiron mayhem.

MicroLeague Football (MLSA) Ed Daniels (program) and Subway Software (design) collaborated on this fully animated, stat-based simulation using real NFL teams and players. Draft and stat compiler options will be available in either the original package or as subsequent disks.

Video Games

Football (Atari/2600) Earliest football game for the Atari 2600. Extremely crude, with two-player teams and vertical movement.

Football (Magnavox/Odyssey2) One of the earliest grideo games but fairly sophisticated. Good head-to-head play. Left-to-right nonscrolling playfield, with top-down view of the field and players seen in side perspective.

Football (Bally/Bally Professional Arcade/Bally Home Arcade/Astrocade) Near arcade-quality action football contest. Horizontally scrolling action mixed top-down (gridiron) and side-view (players) graphics in a smooth game that was a joy to play.

NFL Football (Mattel/Intellivision) Two-player only action-strategy contest used the same visual presentation as Bally's *Football* but had larger on-screen figures that were also drawn better. Impressive play selection struck some players as being too complicated.

M-Network Football (Mattel/2600) One of Mattel's first releases for the Atari 2600 was this horizontally scrolling arcade-style football game. Comparable to *RealSports Football.*

RealSports Football (Atari/2600) Second-generation football video game from Atari. Horizontal scrolling with the traditional top-down/side-view visual presentation.

RealSports Football (Atari/5200) Horizontally scrolling arcade-style football with some nice touches. Eighteen different offensive formations, six defensive. QBs can choose between two eligible receivers on each play. Defensive coach controls the MLB, who can move before the snap in order to set up for blitzes.

Super Action Football (Coleco/ColecoVision) One of the first football games to use the realistic "in the stands" viewpoint with horizontal scrolling. Impressive looking game was sabotaged by being linked to Coleco's dud "Super Action Controllers."

10 Yard Fight (Nintendo/NES) Vertically scrolling coin-op translation with a heavy passing slant and a minimum of strategic input. Contains good arcade-style football action for fans of offensive play.

Great Football/Sports Pad Football (Sega/SMS) *Great Football* and *Sports Pad Football* are the same game; the only difference is that the latter version is compatible with Sega's doomed Sports Pad controllers. The two-player game is a straightforward arcade football game, but the solitaire game is actually a football variant featuring offense *only.*

John Elway's Quarterback (Tradewest/NES) Solid video version of the Leland coin-op. The vertically scrolling, top-down presentation stresses action and ease of play, but the passing play mechanic is a little clumsy. The on-field players, though small, are well-animated.

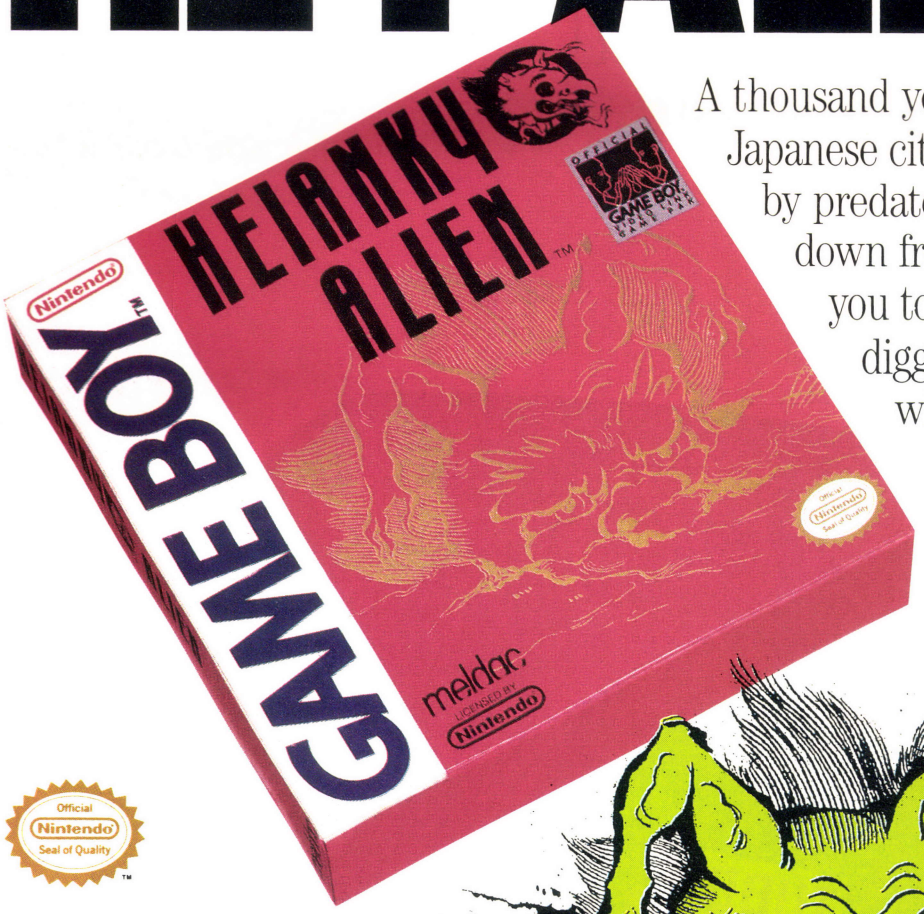
Tecmo Bowl (Tecmo/NES) A no-brains-required football game that allows players to get into a game quickly and finish it in one sitting. Not the prettiest football video game around, but certainly one of the most playable.

NFL (LJN/NES) The first NES football game to feature real NFL teams. Horizontally scrolling gridiron action with a beautiful top-down/side-view display that harkens back to an earlier generation of football games.

Mike Ditka's Big Play Football (Accolade/NES) Accolade's *4th & Inches* seems to have inspired this one or two-player in-the-stands NES football game by Tokyo-based Pony Canyon. Six teams with full statistics (not real NFL teams). *QB Scramble*'s main innovation is the gamer's ability to freeze the action just before making a pass, in order to check out the status of both receivers.

—B. K. & A. K.

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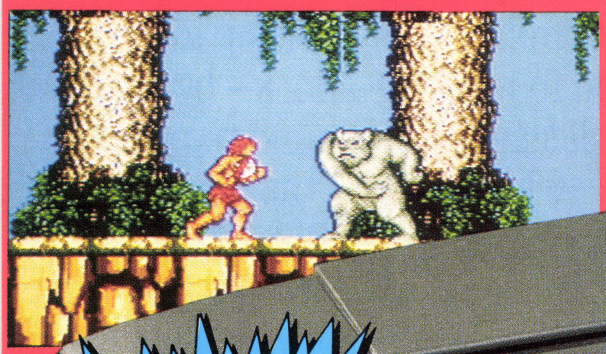
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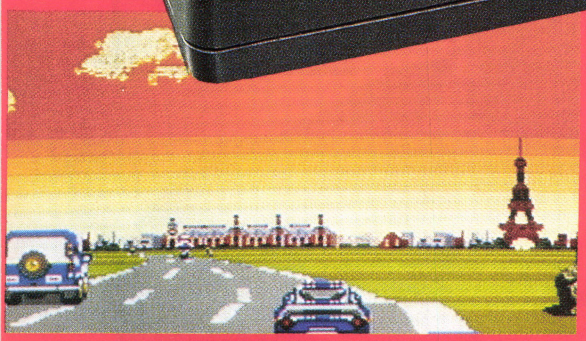
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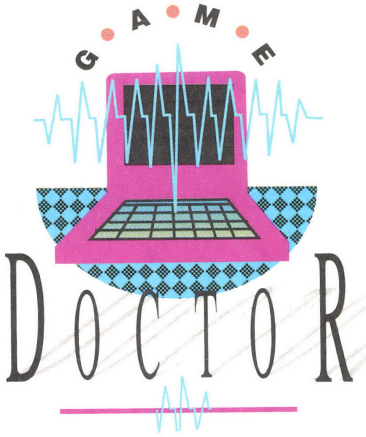
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All Questions Answered All the Time!

by the Game Doctor

Before we get to this month's questions, I would like to provide updates on some questions from previous columns. First, the *Tetris* trial is over. The judge put the blame for this fiasco (in which video-game rights were sold to both Nintendo and Tengen) on an overzealous agent who peddled rights that he didn't own to Mirrorsoft, a major British publisher, who in turn sold them to Tengen. The Soviets, meanwhile, dealt directly with Nintendo. Tengen's version was judged to be the illegal one, but it looks like Mirrorsoft will be left holding the financial bag, since they sold the rights.

Next, on the new Commodore Amiga-based CD system: the project is apparently still alive, with at least two major publishers continuing to develop software for the system, but much of the entertainment product that was originally scheduled has, in fact, been scrapped.

Now, on to this month's best "Q" and winner of this issue's Game Packet:

question

I know to a person of your electronic-gaming caliber this may seem a simple question, but it is one I have always wondered about. I own a Genesis and IBM computer and, at first, was much more impressed with the Genesis. But recently I purchased *Ultima VI* for my IBM and was surprised to find that the music (with the AdLib board), graphics (except for scrolling) and especially the [game's] depth easily surpassed *Phantasy Star II* or *Super Hydlide*. Considering that *Phantasy Star II* is a 6-meg game and *Ultima VI* is roughly 3-meg, I wonder how *Ultima VI* is so superior?

—Greg Johnston
Newport Beach, California

answer

This is indeed a simple question, Greg, but I'm a simple kinda guy; besides, this strikes at the heart of one of the most confusing "bits" of terminology in the electronic-entertainment industry.

First off, "meg" means different things in the computer world than it does in video-game speak. Data is broken down into bits and bytes, right? Think of a byte as a literal "bite" of data; that is, a mouthful of bits. On an 8-bit system, a byte consists of eight bits; on a 16-bit system, a byte is 16 bits—that is, a 16-bit system can process twice as much data (or bits) in a single bite.

When video gamers speak of a game being, for example, "six megs" they are referring to megabits. When computer people talk about a program being "three meg," they are talking megabytes. B-I-G difference. But don't feel bad—users aren't the only ones who've been nonplussed by this awkward terminology. At least one computer-software publisher made the same mistake while translating one of its multi-event programs to a popular video-game system. When the computer house sent in the first of several events for review, the horrified video-game company was immediately burning up the phone lines with the news that the single event used more than twice the memory available for the entire project! Yup, another case of mega-confusion in high places. Enjoy your Game Packet, Greg!

question

I'd like to start off my letter by commending you and your informative column on its success. When I open a new VG&CE, I go straight to your column.... Okay, okay. So I go to the reviews first, so what? But I swear I flip my way through the pages to you, second.

I'm a 13-year-old Korean kid dealing with the everyday pressures of school. I have parents who *despise* my two favorite hobbies: comic collecting and video games. When I play video games, it's usually by sneaking it while my mom's gone or relatively distracted. I own a Genesis—which I got last Christmas through hard work, sweat and heavy persuasion—and three games. (Do you have any ideas on how to convince parents that video games aren't that bad?)

My Korean cousin visited me and brought with him a Mega Drive [the Genesis in Japan]. We tried playing my U.S. version of *Ghouls & Ghosts* on his Mega Drive (you must open the casing to get the [game board] to fit) and—voilà!—the U.S. version of *Ghouls & Ghosts* appeared with Japanese lettering. We tried the same thing with *Revenge of Shinobi* and on the title screen it said *Super Shinobi*. Interesting, eh?

—Jae Keh
Rivervale, New Jersey

answer

Very. As was your entire letter (and, yes, I know you asked more questions, and I promise to get to them in a future issue). On the matter of convincing parents of the value of video games, let me say this, Jae: Video games are entertainment. Like most movies, art, paperback novels and TV shows, they generally don't strive to do much more than engage the senses and, at their best, the imagination of the user.

However, interactive electronic games do have several less-than-obvious virtues. For one thing, they are interactive. The user doesn't just sit there like a sofa spud, watching the 50th rerun of the episode where Gilligan swallows the radio receiver. Game players must be able to think clearly and act effectively; one can't sit, vegetating, and survive very long in even the most puerile video game. Then there's the fact that playing video games prepares us, intellectually and emotionally, to interact with computers in other phases of our existence.

Most of all, though, good video games are fun. As with any form of recreation, of course, the time we spend on them must be limited. But as part of a healthy lifestyle, video games show every evidence of being a stimulating and harmless diversion.

question

About three or four years ago, I read an article about collecting Atari 2600 cartridges. These carts supposedly became collectible because they appeared during

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CIRCLE #165 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

the "shakeout," when companies such as Data Age, Apollo and 20th Century Fox came and went almost without notice. Strange titles, such as *Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes* and *Porkys* (!), are, in my eyes, coveted prizes.

But this is a hobby that few have heard of. When I ask people to show me their games, they either can't find them or, if they can, they have the same old games.

So, I'm writing to you for help. Can you tell me:

1) If there is any place that I could find these games (one in particular, the *"Maltese" Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, has given me terrible trouble)?

2) If there is any way at all to compute their value?

3) If there is anyone else out there who does this as a hobby?

Thanks for your help; your column is the best.

—Gary Phelps
Greensburg, Indiana



Answers by the number, Gary:

1) I can't think of any retail establishment likely to have these games, and believe me, from a collector's point of view, you're better off that way. After all, if everyone had these games, they wouldn't be collectibles! That's why items that are sold as "collector's items" rarely become valuable, since people tend to keep them. It's the stuff we throw away that acquires value later on. I'd suggest flea markets, garage sales and putting advertisements in appropriate periodicals, both local and national.

2) The value of collectibles is only established once the collectors get together and determine how rare various items are and what they're worth. The bottom line for all collectibles, however, is that they're worth whatever someone will pay for them.

3) I'm sure there are. In fact, if you send me a second letter giving me permission to do so, I'd be happy to pass on your name and address to any readers sharing your passion. Let me know, and good hunting! (And if it makes you feel any better, I don't have a copy of *Chain Saw Massacre* either.)



As soon as I get my VG&CE every month, I read the Q&As. I think it's the best [feature] in the magazine. Thanks for the hours and hours of fun I've had reading it.

Now I have a question I desperately need an answer to, concerning the Nintendo Super Famicom. I talked to Nintendo of America to ask when it will be out. They said they aren't going to bring it to the United States. I would like to know why this is.

—Chuck Young
Enterprise, Kansas



The Super Famicom or the "Super NES SFX," which is its current working designation (and man, I sure hope they change that name before it leaves Japan), will certainly be coming to the U.S. Nintendo simply doesn't want to prematurely bury its 8-bit market by hyping the arrival of its 16-bit wonder. According to industry sources, Nintendo's newest game machine, whatever it's eventually called, will reach America sometime in 1991.



I really enjoy the *Game Doctor* column and now I have some questions of my own to ask you.

1) When Nintendo marketed its *Super Mario Bros. 2* in the U.S., I read somewhere that it was not based on the Japanese version of *SMB2*, but [on] a title called *Dream World*. It also said that the Japanese *SMB2* was released on disk. What kind of computer was this for? Is it compatible with an American computer system?

2) Two of my favorite arcade games ever are *Cyberball* and *Xybots*. Are either of these games available for PCs? If so, which companies make them?

3) How do you join a service like CompuServe?

—Kersten Kappmeyer
Alma, Wisconsin



I enjoyed having you here, Kersten! Now for your answers:

1) The Japanese version of *SMB2* you speak of was released on disk for the Famicom, which is the Japanese version of the NES. The difference is that in Japan, there is a disk drive available for the Famicom. These disks will not run on any computer system other than the Famicom.

2) Both games are available for a variety of video game and computer systems from Tengen.

3) CompuServe's number is (800) 848-8990. Telecomputer services like CompuServe, Prodigy, GEnie, Delphi and Quantum require the user to sign up so time can be billed to them. In the case of some services, such as Quantum, a custom program that's used to get online is sent to the user. Others, like Delphi, can be logged onto with any standard telecommunications software and a modem.

Q&A BITS & PIECES

• Robert Gauss of Forest Hill, Maryland, writes that Toys "R" Us is an excellent source for Vectrex games. "Some [locations] have a clearance software section. Right now you'll find a lot of C-64 software in it. Those sections are where you can find rare software, like Vectrex or Microvision games. If there is a Vectrex game, chances are it is under $2! Unfortunately...all of the Vectrex cartridges in the Baltimore area toy stores have dropped out of sight. In fact, there was only one left. It cost 96¢, so I picked it up [on April 24, 1990] to prove that it is possible to find some. It had no instructions, and the box looks like it's been under a heap for six years. I hope it will go to a good home with a Vectrex somewhere; however, I would like to know if it works."

Thanks, Robert! The copy of *Star Trek* you sent indeed works and has been added to the Doc's official collection of electronic-gaming memorabilia bound someday for the Smithsonian, no doubt. So get out there, you Vectrexians, and scour those toy stores' clearance software sections!

• Dylan Walker, meanwhile, a newcomer to VG&CE from Westport, Connecticut, wants to know about an "early Atari game called *Cloak & Dagger*—no one seems to have it." As far as I know, Dylan, it was an Atari coin-op (based on a 1984 film starring Dabney Coleman and Henry Thomas). I don't recall ever seeing a home version of it. Anybody?

• Brent N. Webb-Hicks of Baltimore, Maryland, sends a very nice letter wondering why Atari feels it must dump on the Game Boy in order to sell its Lynx (which he owns and loves, by the way). "Don't they realize that their Lynx is almost $100 more than the Game Boy? I mean, at that price, the Lynx *should* be better!" Good point. He also believes: "the Super Famicom will demolish [both] the Genesis and the TurboGrafx-16, whenever it is released." Could be, Brent, but do you realize that there has never been, to my knowledge, a successful second-generation version of a megahit video-game system? Remember the Atari 5200? Or the Intellivision2? Or Frank Sinatra Jr.? (Whoops! Sorry about that!)

The Genesis looks like a good bet to break that losing streak, but the Sega Master System isn't nearly so successful as the NES. Between unrealistic expectations, based on the popularity of the NES (and the long wait for the next generation system), and the general uneasiness consumers experience at the idea of buying "this year's version" of last year's appliance, I don't think the Super Famicom is as much of a sure thing as most people seem to think.

• Brian Stubbs of Duncan, British Columbia, up in the Great White North, says he "barely remembers a video-game system that resembled the Intellivision, but it said Radio Shack/Tandy instead. I was seven and only saw it once." This recollection is haunting poor Brian, so let's let him off the hook. No, dear patient, you were not fantasizing, you did indeed see that game system. In fact, it not only looked like an Intellivision, it was an Intellivision! That's right, Tandy signed a deal with Mattel to produce Intellivisions under the Tandy name, much as Sears sold the Atari 2600 as the Sears Tele-Arcade. I hope that calms your fevered brow, Brian.

And that about wraps things up for this installment of *Game Doctor*. The swimming pool (not to mention the Game Nurse) beckons. Remember: Send your questions, comments, Vectrex cartridges, fanzines and assorted goodies to THE GAME DOCTOR, 330 S. DECATUR, SUITE 152, LAS VEGAS, NV 89107. See you all in thirtysomething!

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CHIPS & BITS

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CIRCLE #183 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Modem owners! VG&CE can be reached online with comments and hints. We'd be happy to hear from you. Electronic Mail can be sent to us on the following systems:

CompuServe: 70007,3554
GEnie: VIDGAME
DELPHI: VIDGAMES
Prodigy: CKJB66A
MCI Mail: VIDGAMES

If you'd like more information on how these systems operate and how to sign up, give them a call and tell them VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT sent you!

CompuServe: 800-848-8990
GEnie: 800-638-9636
DELPHI: 800-544-4005
Prodigy: 800-822-6922, x556
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continued from page 119

Scattered throughout the caverns are useful items, including slime shields, gun power-ups (which increase your firepower), megabombs, jet packs (don't use one while standing in water!) and cleansers (for turning a pool of slime into water). You also carry a computer map, which allows to you review where you've been and spot hidden openings into rooms you haven't yet explored (it also shows you the location of other players in multi-player mode).

The game is mean. Each of its six levels is a complete game in itself, and each one has different goals. In one, you have to keep finding special mushrooms to lengthen your time limit; in another you have but one life, and your goal is to get as far as you can before you die; and in another only one player can escape! It's routine to complete a level with a score in the millions, which should give you some idea of how complex this game really is.

Slime World has great graphics. When you step in some water, your character scrubs away any slime. If he falls a long way, his feet get mired in the slime and it takes him a few steps to free them. The sound is good, too, from the splattering noises of dying enemies to the cries of others, to the heart-stopping "chomp" when a man-eating monster pops unexpectedly from an innocent-looking floor and devours your character in one gulp.

Slime World is a real gross-out game, but whether or not you're into alien mucus doesn't really matter. This is a Lynx must-have.

Gauntlet: The Third Encounter

Atari for the Lynx

Looking for a handheld game that improves upon the arcade original? Well, look no farther, this is it. *Gauntlet* and *Gauntlet II* were arcade hits and very popular on home video games and computers as well, but all previous versions have suffered from one tiny, unavoidable detail: they only had one screen. One screen means all of the players (up to four on the arcade versions) are stuck together. They can't split up and go separate ways.

Well, with *The Third Encounter* this is no longer a concern. Since each Lynx has its own screen, each player, up to a maximum of four, is free to roam at will. No longer will one player get beaten to death because the position of other players prevents the screen from scrolling and allowing him to escape danger.

This game is very much like all the previous versions. You search through large dungeons for a valuable artifact (the Star Gem) and must fight your way through myriad monsters and other dangers to reach that goal. However, *The Third Encounter* seems to have been designed with more of a sense of humor than previous versions. Enemies include giant, jumping frogs, cacti, land sharks (fins that move across the floor like a shark underwater) and even plants right out of *Little Shop of Horrors* that grab players, chew a bit, then spit them high into the air, dropping them in a different part of the dungeon! Even the choices of player-characters are tongue-in-cheek. In addition to the usual wizard and valkyrie, you can be a pirate, gunfighter, samurai, nerd, punk rocker or android!

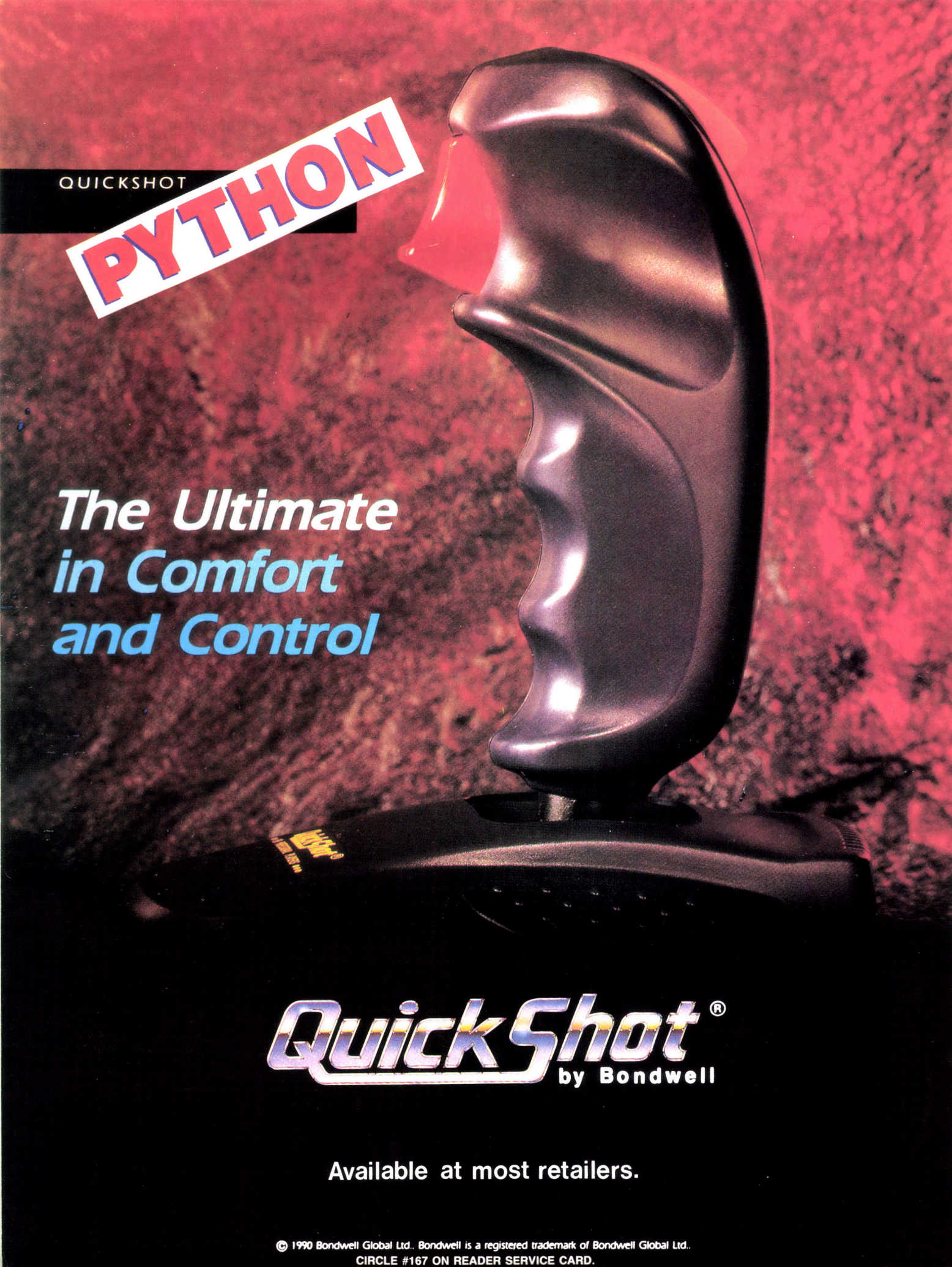
One interesting change of pace is that the image on the screen has been turned 90 degrees so that the picture is taller than it is wide, requiring you to hold your Lynx with the long axis up and down.

The game's graphics are good, particularly in light of the size of the screen. It features a nice long-range window that shows you what your character sees, such as approaching scorpions that haven't yet appeared in the main view. The game's one weak spot is its sound. The music is good, but the rest of the sound is a little ordinary. The arcade versions' "Ow!" cries from characters being hit are sorely missed. A worthwhile game for one, but more fun with a friend.

That's it for now. Next month, we'll look at *NFL Football*, *Soccer Mania* and *Wizards & Warriors X: The Fortress of Fear* for the Game Boy (and more).

Gotta go! So many games, so little time!

The author would like to give monstrously huge thanks to Sheila M. Boughten at Bullet-Proof Software for sending a prerelease copy of Pipe Dream *for the Game Boy, Juli Wade at Atari Corp. for providing sneak previews of* Klax *and* Slime World *and also Danielle Morris of Bob Thomas and Associates for providing various Lynx stuff for review.*



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COMPUTER GAME REVIEWS

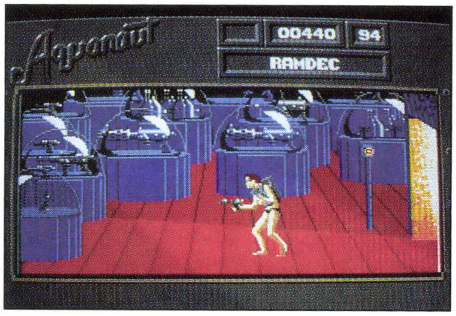
Aquanaut

MILES COMPUTING

Versions: Amiga ($39.95), Atari ST ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Non-disk-based copy protection is a wonderful thing. The use of wheels and keywords requires the would-be pirate not only to duplicate the software, the easiest part of the piracy equation, but also some external book or device. Sometimes, however, a publisher goes so far overboard in trying to establish a clever protection scheme in keeping with the theme of the game that the entire product is tainted by the association.





Miles Computing's *Aquanaut* takes the player where few computer games have before: into battle deep under the sea to locate an alien base.

Aquanaut, an otherwise workmanlike horizontally scrolling arcade adventure by Addictive Software (or Fissionchip, the credits are a little unclear) is such a game. In an attempt to keep the copy protection in the spirit of this undersea epic, the user is assigned a latitude and longitude reading to chart on a hard-to-read map in order to produce a depth reading. There is only one problem: Nowhere in the documentation is there any instruction as to exactly how one reads such a chart!

Once the player masters the booting sequence, *Aquanaut* is a visually impressive, if morally questionable, arcade-style adventure. The Aquanaut Team, led by Commander T. S. Williams, has been assigned to locate an undersea alien base. Getting to this subterranean metropolis involves first surviving a horizontal scroll through several spooky underwater scenarios.

The diver (only one diver appears onscreen at any one time, despite the fact that there's a team) moves through three sections: Shark Reef, the Labyrinth and the Hidden City. Shark Reef is a fairly ordinary undersea scenario, populated by normal sea life. Vampiric aliens begin to appear once the divers reach the mazelike subterranean Labyrinth. At the end of the second section, the diver gains access to the alien city, where he walks about rather than swimming. The divers are armed with projectile darts that fire easily underwater, though other weapons, such as plasma mines and dynamite, can be obtained during play.

There are a few graphic gaffes here; for example, fish can't be be hit while they're turning, but then neither can the player-character. That's small stuff compared to the overall bad karma created by *Aquanaut.* In these enlightened times, the idea of randomly destroying sea life simply will not wash with most players. The player is even awarded points for killing dolphins (which, unlike the swordfish, sharks and jellyfish can't kill the player-character). This absolutely sent chills up my spine.

The graphics are well-executed, especially the movement of the various organic characters, but a lack of billowing seaweed hurt the overall effect. There's nothing outstanding here, but if you don't mind mowing down fishies, *Aquanaut* provides some solid, arcade-style action.

—Bill Kunkel

Miles Computing
c/o Electronic Arts Distribution
1820 Gateway Drive
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Loom

LUCASFILM GAMES

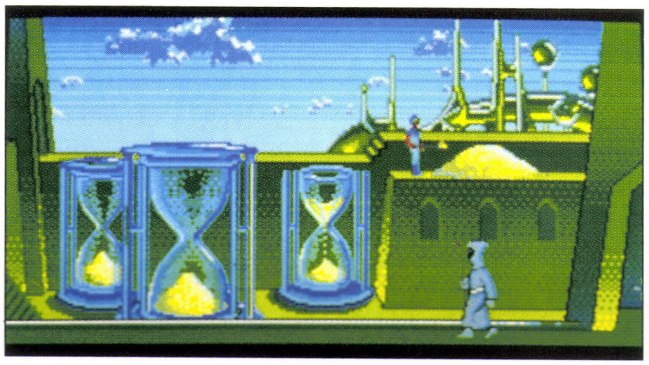
Versions: Amiga ($59.95), Atari ST ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Loom, the latest release from Lucasfilm, breaks new ground in graphics, interface and game-design philosophy. It's set in the

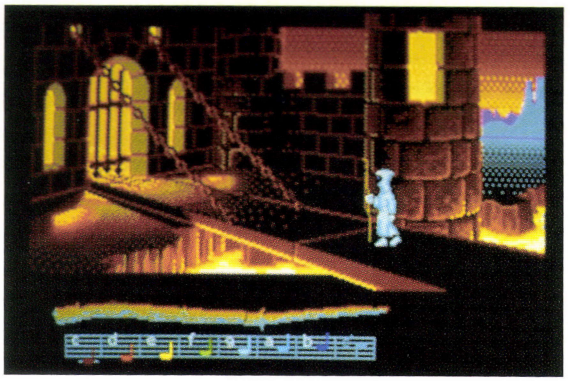
mythical Age of the Great Guilds, when all industries have been banded into powerful, competing societies.

The gamer plays the part of Bobbin Threadbare, a member of the Guild of Weavers. This reclusive organization has learned to weave magic and destiny, as well as cloth. Soon after the game begins, the rest of the guild is transformed and spirited away. Bobbin must travel in a world torn by war and dark magic, find his guild and unravel the mystery of his own origin.



Lucasfilm has created a mystical, mythical journey for the player in *Loom*, an adventure game that breaks new ground in graphics and game design.

The ideology behind most games combines "if it moves, kill it" with "one false step and you die." *Loom* takes the opposite position; the main character seems to be a pacifist, and doing something foolish will (at worst) send the character on a brief detour. Game play has been simplified into three options: movement, item selection and spell-casting. A tape is included, with a 30-minute drama that provides the background and personalities of the main characters.





The player moves the character by positioning the cursor and clicking the mouse (or hitting ENTER on the keyboard). Animation is smooth, even on slow machines. As Bobbin moves from foreground to background, his size changes. If an object can be examined or used, its image appears in the icon box at the bottom of the screen.

The only item that Bobbin must add to his inventory is the distaff, both a magical wand and the interface to the game. The staff is divided into eight sections, and each time a four-note musical spell is cast in Bobbin's presence, the appropriate section of the staff glows. The gamer replays the spell by clicking the mouse on the correct section or by typing in the musical notes.

When Bobbin encounters a non-player character, the game pauses for a "cut scene," a short piece of animation. These characters volunteer information without having to be interrogated.

There is one technical glitch: Whenever words are superimposed over graphics that move, large chunks of text vanish. This happens constantly in the final confrontation.

The designers did well to simplify the game, but perhaps they went too far. An experienced game player (while impressed by the stunning graphics and sound) can finish the game over a weekend. However, this game is ideal for a novice player or anyone tired of the constant bloodshed seen in other games.

On the positive side, *Loom* comes with three levels of play. In the expert mode, for example, the distaff will not light up as spells are cast; the gamer must play the game by ear. In some games, the background story seems to be written at the last minute and grafted on; by contrast, the story behind *Loom* is central, complex and well-crafted. There are still some loose threads at the conclusion, leaving open the chance for a sequel.

—Alan Roberts

Lucasfilm Games
P.O. Box 2009
San Rafael, CA 94912
(415) 662-2460

Railroad Tycoon

MICROPROSE

Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Model trains have an ageless appeal. Grown men spend hours trying to replicate

the feel of the real thing, running miniature trains around elaborate networks. MicroProse captured much of this excitement in their latest release, *Railroad Tycoon.* However, *Railroad Tycoon* is much more than just a computerized model train set.

At the beginning of each game the player heads a new railroad in the virgin territory of one of the four areas: the Eastern U.S., Western U.S., England and Central Europe. Each locale features its own set of challenges. The borders of each territory stay the same, but raw materials and terrain are randomly distributed, making each game a different experience. Up to three computer-controlled railroads compete on the same map and add pressure for the player to expand his network.

Most of the petty details are taken care of for the player, but enough decisions are required to add a strategic foundation. During each two-year fiscal cycle, game trains actually run one 24-hour cycle. This corresponds to one hour of operation per game month, and all revenues are multiplied accordingly to produce proper income amounts.

The player plans the overall route, and it takes careful attention to make trains travel at an efficient pace. Sometimes this may require signal towers or double tracks in key locations; at other times it's simply a matter of manually overriding switching signals to let an important cargo speed by.

At the start of each game the trains are fairly basic, somewhat slow and only able to pull a few cars. As time advances, more powerful locomotives become available for purchase, in close proximity to their actual release years. Only a couple of dozen trains are included, but each represents an important breakthrough in engine technology and adds enough diversity to keep *Railroad Tycoon* interesting.

The player starts out with $1,000,000 for advancing the railroad. Every action taken costs money, whether it's laying tracks or operating an engine. These costs are offset by the successful delivery of goods between various cities. The game's economy varies over time, raising or lowering the prices of credit, the amount earned for product deliveries and the cost for new construction.

A certain amount of credit is useful to finance a lucrative expansion, but if the company becomes overburdened with debt, it may be impossible to pay interest payments on the borrowed money. In this case, the railroad may go under.





***Railroad Tycoon*, by MicroProse, is a thoroughly engrossing strategy game, in the same vein as *SimCity*, that requires you to build a successful railroad system.**

The sound and graphics are well-done. A wide variety of displays allow flexibility in viewing the playing arena. Trains are seen chugging around their routes, and they look especially nice at the highest zoom factor. Train sounds signal different game actions and add to the realistic feel.

A few minor bugs slipped through play testing, but the biggest problem with the game is its complexity. While a tutorial is provided for a reasonably quick start, it does take quite a while to figure out how to successfully run a railroad. A good strategy guide would have helped.

Railroad Tycoon is thoroughly engrossing. It does an excellent job of blending strategic and tactical decisions into a very playable package. *Railroad Tycoon* should be on every player's shelf and may well be the game of the year.

—R. Bradley Andrews

MicroProse Software
180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley, MD 21030
(301) 771-1151

Centurion: Defender of Rome

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

The year is 275 B.C. Rome is still a couple of centuries from its high noon under Augustus, but it's clearly a happening young empire. It took 400 years, but the Romans finally put the boots to the rebellious Italian provinces and brought them to heel. Now Rome stands poised to build a mighty empire.

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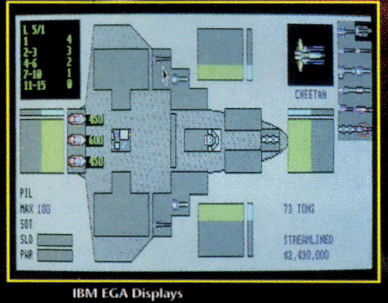
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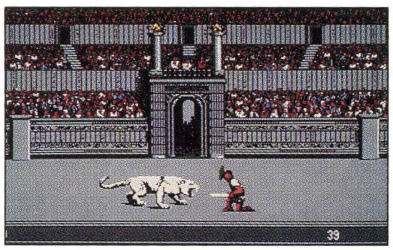
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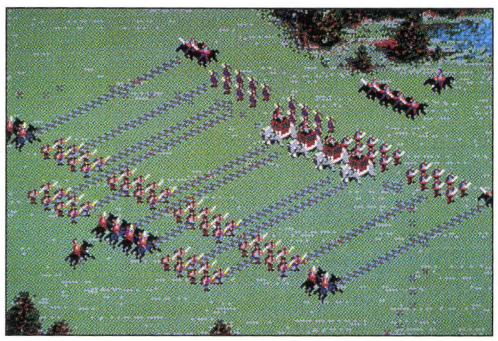
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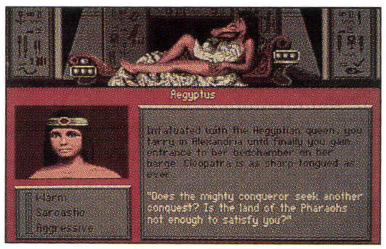
STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.®

Centurion: Defender of Rome, the latest from *Defender of the Crown* creator Kellyn Beck and Evan and Nicky Robinson (a/k/a Bits of Magic). The player is cast as an ambitious young centurion (not unlike Julius) whose future is linked to Rome's. As Rome prospers, so does the centurion, accumulating status, rank and power, culminating in his ascendance to the role of Caesar.





Centurion uses many of the devices and protocols established in *Defender of the Crown*; but this game is a much more mature work. *Centurion* is also a more ambitious project. That ambition is evidenced in the game's epic quality, which elevates and, occasionally, overwhelms it.



Electronic Arts' *Centurion: Defender of Rome*, designed by *Defender of the Crown* creator Kellyn Beck, is a mature work that pushes the player to help Rome prosper.

The game's greatest weakness lies at its core: Who exactly is the player supposed to be? This centurion, after all, is quite a guy. From the outset of the game he can stage chariot races (even racing the chariot himself!); move the Roman army anywhere he likes without ever consulting with the Senate; levy and collect taxes; and keep the populous in a mellow frame of mind. Before long, he's building fleets and amphitheaters and staging gladiatorial combat. This godlike status doesn't jibe with the centurion's low status and personal wealth at the start of the game. After all, what the *real* Julius Caesar did was first conquer an empire, then return to Rome with the world's greatest army at his back. At that point there were few Romans who dared challenge him.

Quibbles in logic aside, however, *Centurion* is a lot of fun to play. All the basic action is conducted, à la *Defender of the Crown*, off a basic map screen with numerous pop-up menu windows. Unlike that earlier game, however, where the outcome of battles was decided off-screen, battles are fought, start to finish, in a style reminiscent of Cinemaware's *Lords of the Rising Sun.*

In *Centurion*, the player first determines his army's formation (balanced, wedge, strong right, strong left) then enters in tactics (frontal assault, Scipio's defense, outflank, etc.). The battle begins on-screen and unfolds in an impressive visual display, accompanied by an appropriately heroic musical score. At any point during battle, the player can convey orders to any units within his "calling range" (determined by the centurion's charisma). He can also order a retreat or release the legion by issuing the melee command.

Centurion is remarkably complete, right down to the Elephant Cohorts (these units really spook the pants off barbarians), signing treaties and keeping the provinces from revolution. The arcade-type elements, like the chariot races, were probably unnecessary and only enforce the idea that the player-character is too godlike. Players who buy *Centurion* for its action elements will be greatly disappointed.

Those who come in search of a remarkable role-playing simulation that's historically complete, but never tedious, will find *Centurion* tremendously rewarding.

—B. K.

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

Strike Aces: International Bombing Competition

ACCOLADE

Versions: Amiga ($49.95); Commodore 64 ($39.95); IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

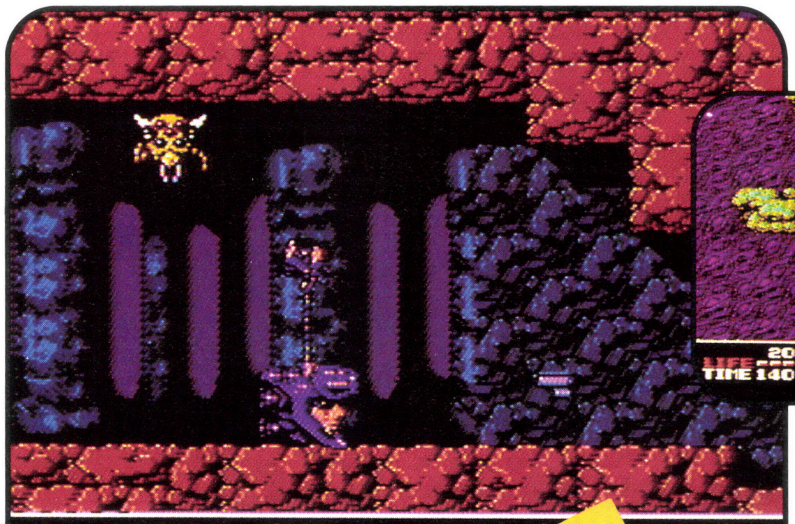
If there is any type of aircraft that hasn't already been simulated, chances are it's already on some developer's drawing board. It's pretty remarkable, therefore, that up until now, no one came up with the idea of an air-strike competition. Fortunately for flight-simulator enthusiasts, Accolade's excellent *Strike Aces: International Bombing Competition* will fill that gap.

Strike Aces, from Vektor Graphics (with tech support from Dave Arneson, a former U.S. attack aircraft pilot), is based on the

Stab!

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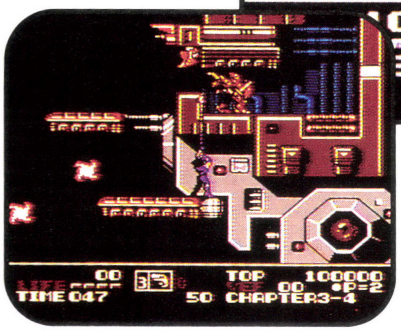
Stab a frozen ForceFace to gain the powerful Wave!

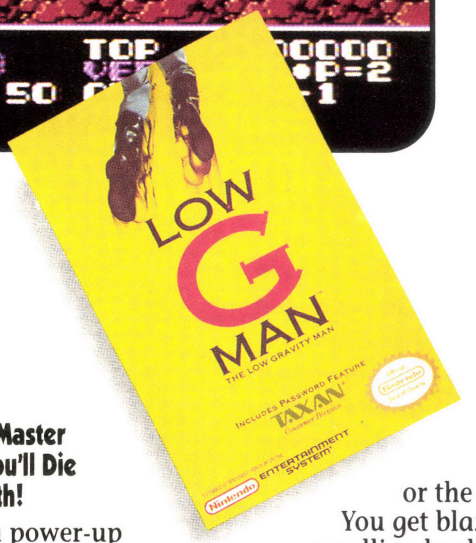


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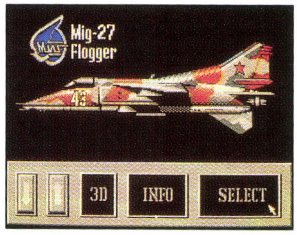


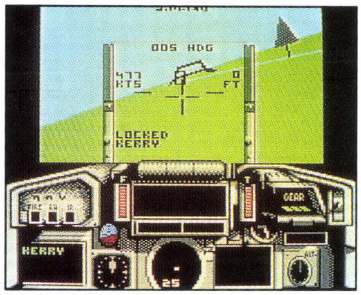
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Consumer Division

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1984 competition at which NATO and Warsaw Pact top guns met in the skies over the Dakotas to see who could do the most damage. The operations consisted of air-to-air and air-to-ground strategic missions, and the objective was to see how the two groups matched up in their technological creations and the men who fly them. The winner was awarded the title "Strike Ace" and the coveted Curtis LeMay trophy. In subsequent years, the Bombing & Navigation Competition run by the Strategic Air Command (SAC) has become an annual event at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota.





Accolade's *Strike Aces* goes beyond the simple flight-simulator foundation and creates an exciting air-strike competition.

Strike Aces has quite a bit going for it as a simulation. Precision strike missions, whether air-to-air or air-to-ground, are a lot of fun to fly. They're short but bombastic and keep the player tightly focused on a specific goal. Then there are the excellent cockpit graphics, especially on the IBM VGA version.

For flight buffs, much of *Strike Aces'* appeal comes from the access to enemy aircraft, especially the Russian MIGs. Aircraft selection includes: the McDonnell Douglas F-15E and F-4E, the General Dynamics F-111F, the British Panavia Tornado IDS, the Swedish Saab AJ37 and the Russian MIG-27 Flogger-D. Each aircraft can be flown against seven other computer-guided enemy fighters representing France, Sweden, the United States, Great Britain and Russia.

The 16 prefab missions include such favorites as attacking a terrorist encampment, taking out an enemy aircraft and destroying the palace of a dictator while liberating the imprisoned rightful ruler. The locations for these scenarios include Mt. Rushmore, Rapid City, South Dakota, and the Wyoming Badlands. Before each mission, the player selects and arms his or her aircraft and is then briefed and shown a map of the of the strike area.

The aircraft are easy to fly, the ground visuals look realistic and the mayhem created by the arsenal of weaponry is appropriately pyrotechnical. The IBM version comes in CGA, EGA, VGA, Hercules MGA and Tandy graphics formats and *Strike Aces* supports the Ad Lib and CMS sound boards.

Some of you may feel that there are already too many combat-flight simulators on the market. Those who don't will find *Strike Aces* a terrific addition to their game library. It's tough to stand out in this crowded genre, and the fact that *Strike Aces* does speaks very well for this game.

—B. K.

Accolade
550 S. Winchester Blvd., Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 985-1700

Bad Blood

ORIGIN SYSTEMS

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Commodore 64 ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Post-apocalyptic games are interesting because elements of science fiction and fantasy are intermingled. *Bad Blood* blends these themes in the creation of a compact, cohesive gaming environment.

The premise behind *Bad Blood* is the parallel development of two civilizations, one human and one mutant, after the "Great Fires." Pure humanoids took refuge in walled cities, venturing out only to secure food. Mutations caused by the cataclysm were exiled to the desert, where only the strongest survived.

Eventually the humans entered into a pact with the Kejek, powerful half-man, half-snake mutants, that called for the Kejek to provide slaves to the cities. This lead to generations of warfare between the "Mutes" and the "Humes," as each struggled to tame their portion of the new frontier.

Recently mutant leaders learned that Lord Dominix of Yvrium is attempting to unite the humanoids, with the aid of some ancient technology, in an all-out war to

continued on page 178

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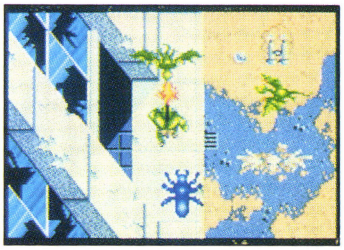
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continued from page 174

eradicate the mutants.

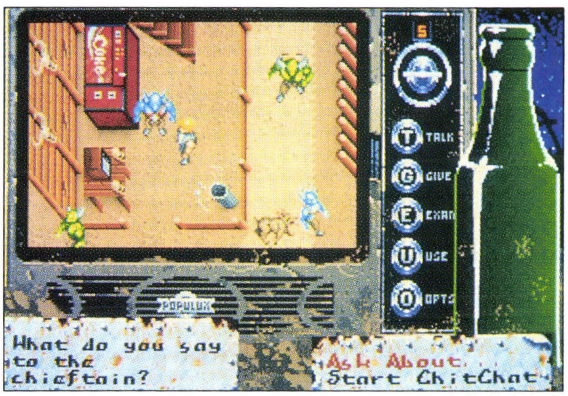
Parallels to our history in the Old West are apparent on many levels. The Kejeks are not unlike Commancheros, and Lord Dominix personifies the genocidal philosophy behind statements like "The only good Indian is a dead Indian."

Players assume the persona of one of three mutants, each possessing unique advantages and disadvantages. The first of these, Dekker, is the only human born to the mutants. Jakka, a female half-breed, can pass for "Hume" but retains some special skills. Varigg, a full-blooded, seven-foot, green-skinned mutant might as well put on his war paint when venturing into "Hume" territory. Although this variety should allow substantially different games, no matter which character is chosen, there is not an appreciable difference in the flow of the game.









After the apocalypse, brutal warfare between human and mutant factions is what you have to contend with in Origin Systems' *Bad Blood*.

The entire role-playing, puzzle-solving aspect of the game is somewhat overshadowed by arcade-type combat. Players have the option of selecting levels of difficulty from warrior to wimp; the latter lowers the frequency and numbers of the opposition. Combat remains more of a centerpiece of the game than the fictional premise. This is unfortunate given the premise inherent in the original story.

Bad Blood uses a simple menu-driven interface that includes the standard adventure fare; inventory, examine, talk, use and a new one, "start chitchat." This option depicts casual small talk, during which NPCs will often let slip pieces of vital information. Once a topic is brought up, if there are other things to find out about, they will appear on the "talk about" menu.

The game is nonlinear, usually a good thing, but in this case it may not be. It's possible to perform some of the later actions early in the game and be quite confused as to how things fit together. Usually designers provide obstacles in nonlinear games so that even if players enter an advanced area, they are too weak to do anything and must return later in the game. In *Bad Blood,* character development does not exist, and a player with a hot stick can go almost anywhere undaunted.

Graphically, *Bad Blood* is slightly above average, with the majority of the action in the classic three-quarter, top-down arcade perspective. The opening title sequence is an exceptional time-lapse portrayal of the cataclysm and rebirth of civilization, up to the moment the game begins. Also, the game seems written for AT series machines and runs entirely too fast on a 25 MHz 386.

Origin has provided a solid mid-range game to appeal to a number of players. But *Bad Blood* does not ascend to its full potential, given the fictional premise and the strength of the design group at Origin.

—Ed Dille

Origin
110 Wild Basin Road, Suite 330
Austin, TX 78746
(512) 328-0282

Code Name: Iceman

SIERRA ON-LINE

Versions: Amiga ($59.95), Atari ST ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Code Name: Iceman, the latest effort by designer Jim *"Police Quest"* Walis, is

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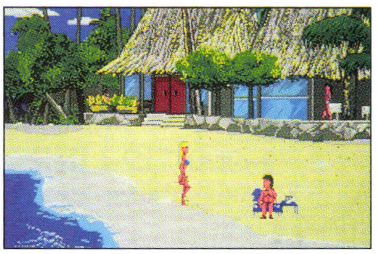
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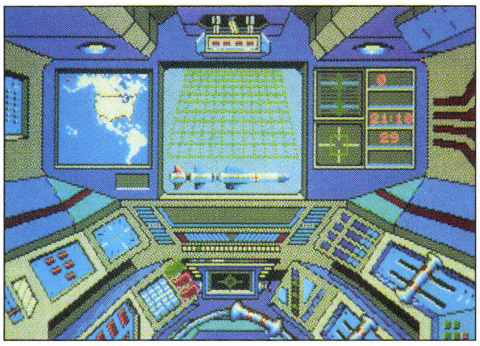
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CIRCLE #171 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

the toughest Sierra game released to date. Experienced players will undoubtedly welcome the frustration, but novices may abhor it. New Sierra players should probably work their way up to this title.

Set in the year 2000, where *glasnost* appears to have suffered some serious reversals, players assume the persona of John Westland, naval officer and member of the elite SEAL (sea, air and land) team. The game begins while on leave in a lush tropical paradise. Unfortunately, this idyllic lifestyle (à la *Leisure Suit Larry*) ends rather abruptly. After a U.S. ambassador is abducted by Middle Eastern terrorists, John must board a state-of-the-art nuclear submarine on a desperate rescue mission. Shortly after he reports aboard, the sea thickens with Soviet adversaries, both surface and subsurface. It's obvious that something's rotten in Moscow too.





In what is Sierra's hardest game to date, *Code Name: Iceman* takes you to the year 2000, where *glasnost* has suffered some severe setbacks, and the U.S. and U.S.S.R. again face military differences.

Navigation, repair and operation of the USS *Blackhawk* takes up a major portion of game time. Decoding radio transmissions via red-print blocks in the manual is copy protection for this segment. It's necessary to navigate the submarine through the Bering strait, under the polar ice cap and through the Atlantic to Tunisia to affect the rescue. Players should be judicious in the use of force against Soviet ships and submarines; remember, the key is getting through to complete the mission.

Driving and fighting the submarine is done from the control-panel screen and is best accomplished with a mouse. It may appear confusing at first, but one rapidly becomes acquainted. As a rule, players should eschew active sonar operation and not waste valuable missiles and torpedos on long-range shots.

Once through the Strait of Gibraltar, it's necessary to sneak into the harbor on a diving vehicle and make contact with a fisherman, who'll provide a vital map.

To get to the fisherman, the player must first get into the underwater cave and follow debris left by a burnt-out flare. Stacy, an associate, can provide some weaponry and a place to safely plan a rescue attempt.

Once in the ambassador's holding place, two terrorists must be dispatched. Then there's a wild car chase up winding roads to a waiting helicopter. This sequence is the only arcade action in the game, and the player should save the game before beginning it. If you're successful, there's an award ceremony for John on the deck of an aircraft carrier.

The graphics are not as colorful as *Hero's Quest*, but they are intricate and elegantly rendered. All modes, including VGA and MCGA, are supported. Sierra is always at the high end of the scale when it comes to sound and supports all the major boards on the market. *Iceman* is no exception: Players will fall in love with the soundtrack right from the opening credits, and it serves to keep the mood flowing throughout. Purchase of the hint book (an additional $9.95) is definitely recommended, as even experienced Sierra players will find some of these puzzles exceedingly challenging. Don't expect to finish this one in a few sittings. *Code Name: Iceman* is complex, but it's a journey worth taking.

—E. D.

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Street Rod

CALIFORNIA DREAMS

Versions: Amiga ($39.95), IBM PC ($39.95), Commodore 64 ($29.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Hot-rodding came into its heyday when gas guzzlers ruled the road, drive-ins and diner parking lots; when 55 miles per hour

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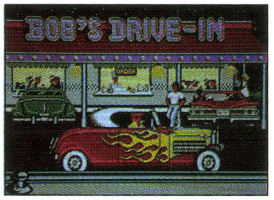
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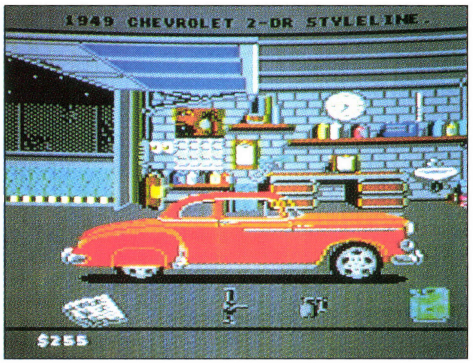
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CIRCLE #172 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

was an intermediate speed on the highways and TV sneered at rock 'n' roll. Hot rods have been around since Henry Ford put automobiles into the hands of the general public, but the ethos of hot-rodding really came into its own in the '50s. Through the '60s it was associated with juvenile delinquency and leather-jacket rebelliousness, and the gas crunch of the early 1970s finally killed it. It subsequently starred in nostalgic movies like *Grease* and *American Graffiti* and TV's *Happy Days.*



There's some question whether hot-rodding is really dead or merely transformed, spread into a variety of hobbys and auto-sports arenas. With *Street Rod*, a concept by Magic Partners developed by PZK Development Company, California Dreams has recaptured something of hot-rodding's original spirit in a quasi-simulation.



California Dreams has brought the gas-guzzling hot rod onto the computer screen in *Street Rod*, offering the player a chance to customize his own machine for cruising.

Simply stated, the idea is to create a hot rod to beat "The King." To do that, the player must select and buy a stock car (and parts), modify it—chopping the roof, stripping the bumpers, changing the transmission and tires, tuning the engine, repainting it and adding a custom sticker job—then cruise on down to Bob's Drive-In to challenge other drivers to either a drag race or a road race. The King won't race anyone without experience.

In the process, the player will learn a great deal about how to drive. The viewpoint is from the driver's seat within the car, with rearview mirrors in the upper-right corner and visible through the left window and a speedometer behind the steering wheel. *Street Rod* allows control with keyboard, joystick or mouse. The techniques for each of them are reasonably intuitive, but the player must use them correctly to accelerate, brake and, with a manual transmission, to shift properly and appropriately for the situation. Speed shifting, for instance, is possible, but could result in a dropped transmission.

Racing is not without dangers, but despite chilling headlines on the simulated newspapers, death and hospitalization don't appear. The player who totals his car is out plenty of cash, but the game is not over until he can't afford to get back on the road again or until school starts. All of this must be accomplished in the course of one summer vacation. There is a calendar on the wall of the garage, and it must be checked every so often during play. Hey, these are the priorities, grease monkeys!

There are 25 available stock cars, ranging from a 1932 Ford Deuce Coupe to a 1963 Plymouth Valiant V-100; the four-color, profusely illustrated manual gives full specs on each. In fact, between the basic manual and the three-page reference card that details controls for the specific computer system, there is a great deal of information offered and considerable detail to be mastered. While the racing portions provide an arcade-like game experience, the results depend not only on the driving skills of the player but also on how well he (or she) put together the simulated car.

It's possible to save a game, or more than one, under different file names. On the IBM PC compatible version, 512K of RAM is required; 640K for Tandy 16-color graphics. Standard CGA and EGA and Hercules video cards are also supported.

Street Rod brings a lot of realism to the highways and byways of simulated driving. Its high-action celebration will make every racer feel just like James Dean!

—Ross Chamberlain

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780 Montague Expressway, Suite 403
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DragonStrike

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95), Commodore 64 ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Just when it seems every idea has already become some sort of video game, along comes a title that's both innovative and imaginative. SSI's latest adventure, *DragonStrike* (created by Westwood Associates), places the player atop a

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CIRCLE #173 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

mighty dragon in the midst of a great war. Evil dragon armies have conquered nearly all of Ansalon. The only hope for the forces of good is a heroic warrior and a dwindling fleet of loyal dragons.

The player controls the dragon with keyboard, mouse or joystick. A two-button joystick works best, since players can fire both weapons via the buttons and automatically center the dragon by simply letting go of the stick. Mouse control isn't bad, but centering is a bit tricky. Without either, the keyboard is a challenging and oftentimes frustrating alternative.

Play begins in the lowest order of knights. As each mission is completed, gamers move up in rank to ride bigger, more powerful dragons. Players continue in this fashion until they either complete 20 missions or die trying.

Once airborne, the gamer navigates the dragon much like a flight simulator. As enemy dragons approach, players use either of two breath weapons to knock the enemy down from a distance.

Unfortunately, the enemy has its own weapon, and evasive action is often necessary. If the distance shots miss, players engage in close-quarter fighting to lance the enemy or have the dragon bite its foe.

The rider must watch the dragon's power as each mission progresses; it decreases if he's forced to climb often or is injured in battle. When this number drops to zero, the dragon glides, unable to steer until he regains his strength. Magical items found along the way can heal the player's wounds or the dragon's.

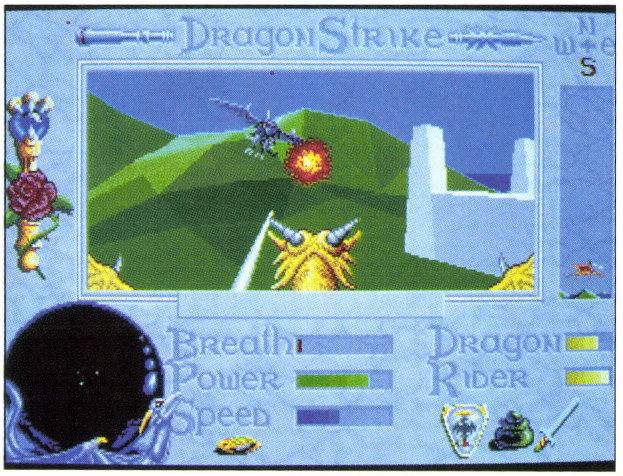
If the dragon is hit while in close combat, there's a chance that the gamer will be dislodged and fall. Fear not, the heroic dragon will attempt to swoop down and catch you. If, however, he should miss, the on-screen warrior dies a nasty death, especially since the ruthless enemy dragons will continue to fire on the helpless body even as it falls.

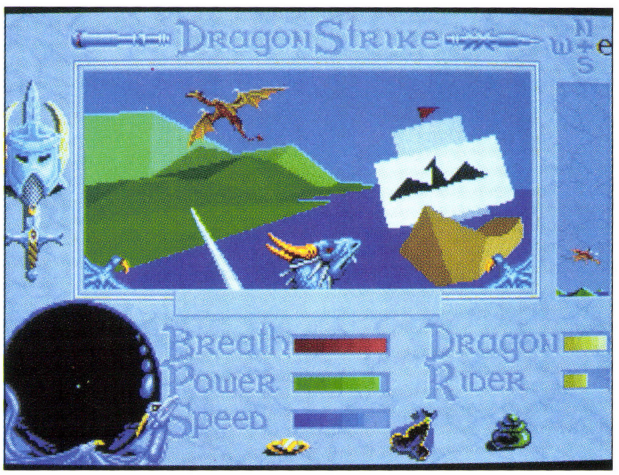


In a totally fresh approach to computerized battle games, SSI's *DragonStrike* will place you on the back of a dragon with potentially lethal breath for some intense combat, magical spells and aerial jousting.

The fast-action side of the game is equally enjoyable. The weapons fire accurately and have a good distance, so a trained player can make some pretty impressive long-distance shots. The dragons are very responsive and can perform some interesting routines. The sound effects while fighting are effective, though not spectacular.

The only drawback occurs when fighting at close range. When the enemy is on you, the instruments become inaccurate, and it's next to impossible to locate the bad guys. This makes it hard to get in position to lance them, and they will most likely hit when you least expect it.





DragonStrike is a breakthrough idea in simulator games. It offers the best of both worlds. The three-dimensional polygon graphics, similar to those found in many modern simulators, are very well done. The images look 3-D, and the terrain scrolls smoother than many other simulators. The only complaint here is that while your own dragon looks terrific, the enemy dragons get very blocky as they get closer.

The plot is well thought out and documented, and the variety in missions makes for hours of game play. *DragonStrike*'s imaginative mix of simulator and action game is both effective and enjoyable.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

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Low Blow

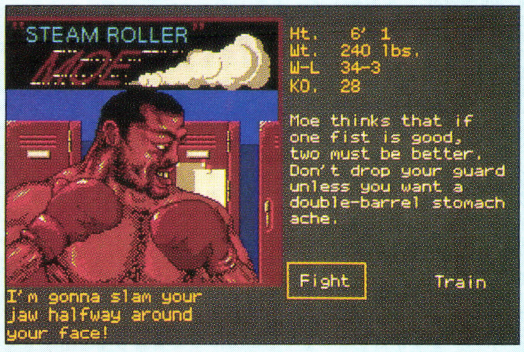
ELECTRONIC ARTS
Version: IBM PC

EA's latest entry adds a new twist to boxing simulations. In this game, players may "low blow" an opponent when the judges aren't looking. This added attraction makes for an extremely challenging and often comical pugilistic event.

The first thing to work on in *Low Blow* is the basic boxing moves. Start each bout by going to the training room, where the computer will show you the correct combination to use to deck each opponent. Observe the move and practice until it can be done consistently. This is also a good spot to practice the basic jabs and uppercuts.

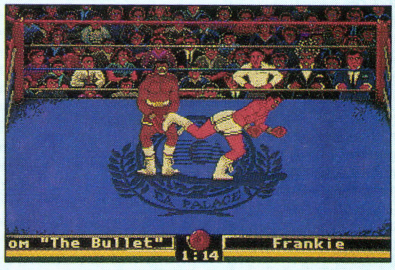
When it's time to enter the ring, keep a close eye on the computer opponent once the first round starts; he will quickly show off his low-blow move. By watching the wind-up, players can tell when this move is coming and avoid being clobbered. If a low-blow move is started by the enemy, there are two ways around it. When it's seen immediately, there is time to move out of the way. If you wait too long to avoid the punch, quickly jab the opponent in the stomach to throw off his attack.

If your player is knocked down, quickly press the stick upward to make him stand. Keep in mind that when the boxer gets up, he won't have any punching power, so don't attack yet. Instead, run around the ring, keeping your distance from the opponent until the power indicator is back up to normal.



On offense, it is important to keep the punches flowing. Try to use the combination that was shown in training to deck the computer-driven fighter. Keep in mind that if you're hit in the middle of the combo-punch, the stride is broken and the series must be started over.

While playing, glance at the judges whenever possible. When they look at each other to talk, it's time to low-blow the opponent. Make sure the judges aren't looking, since being caught more than once in a round is costly.



Where else but in Electronic Arts' *Low Blow* can you take a cheap shot at your opponent and get away with it?

Certain players are more susceptible to low blows than others. Tom ("the Bullet") Burns, for example, will fall for good after three of these blows. Magnificent Mike is another likely candidate. He is strong and always requires a ton of regular punches to fall. A general rule is that even if a player doesn't fall, a low blow will sure take a lot more out of him than any jab or uppercut.

The important thing to remember as you progress through your matches is that the later boxers are very strong. Going toe-to-toe with them is unwise unless you are *extremely* fast on the controls.

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—Frank Tetro, Jr.

DragonStrike

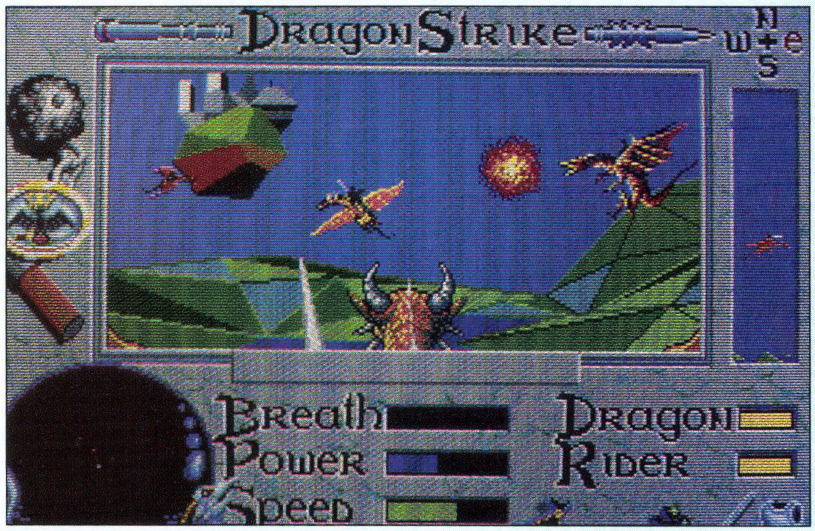
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Versions: Amiga, Commodore 64, IBM PC

SSI's newest entry places players on the back of a mighty serpent in the first-ever dragon-combat simulator. Players must destroy hordes of enemy creatures in the air and on the ground in an effort to restore peace to the lands of Ansalon.

The best way to get an edge in *DragonStrike* is to practice maneuvering the dragon in the early battles. Keep in mind that any quick ascent or high-speed flying will drain the dragon's power rapidly. These moves should therefore be avoided unless used as emergency techniques to avoid disaster. Practice slow gradual banks and slight ascents to maneuver the dragon effortlessly around. This saves his strength for when it is really needed.

Once a scenario begins, use the arrow of enemy detection to locate the bad guys quickly. When they are spotted, try to center the lead dragon as he approaches. Once he's big enough to see clearly, fire the breath weapon and pull up slightly above him. If the breath weapon connects, he's dead. If not, try to position your dragon above the enemy. Attacks from above almost always work better than from below; they inflict damage on both rider and dragon. Try to leave the lance in the center position when fighting. This seems to give it a greater range. It also aids in aiming for a shot with the fire breath.

If the enemy does get off a shot, quickly bank and descend out of the line of fire. Always descend every time possible to avoid wasting energy in battle. Once clear of the shot, veer back around. The enemy is recharging and therefore vulnerable to attack.





Strategic Simulations' *Dragon Strike* pits you against a horde of enemy creatures in the air and on the ground in an effort to restore peace to the lands of Ansalon.

Occasionally an airborne enemy will swarm on you, and it will seem impossible to get him on-screen no matter which way you turn. Should this happen, quickly veer off and descend quickly to pick up speed and throw off the enemy. Once his blip appears about half an inch behind you, turn and fire.

The forces of good are also called on to deal with ground targets from time to time. This is not difficult if players remember two things. First, the ground troops are only affected by your breath weapons, so be sure your aim is true. Also, try to stay as low as possible so you can get a better shot from a strafing position. This must be done with care because the lands of Ansalon are mountainous. It would be embarrassing to smash your dragon into a mountainside in the heat of battle!

—F. T., Jr.

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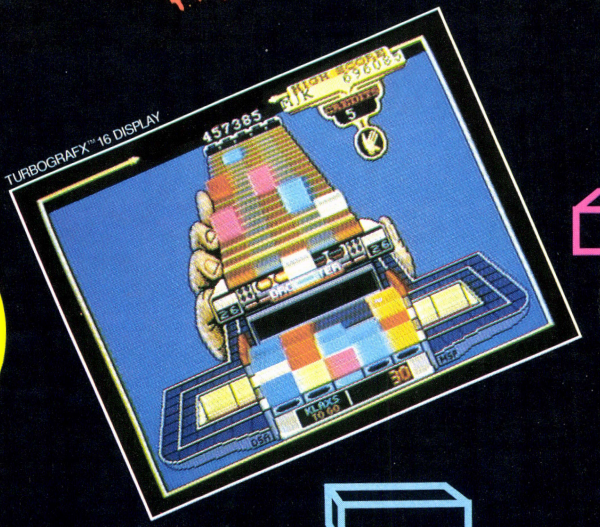
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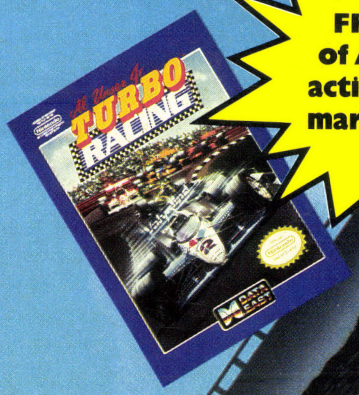
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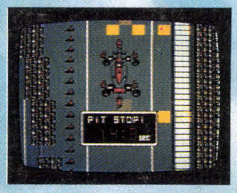
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